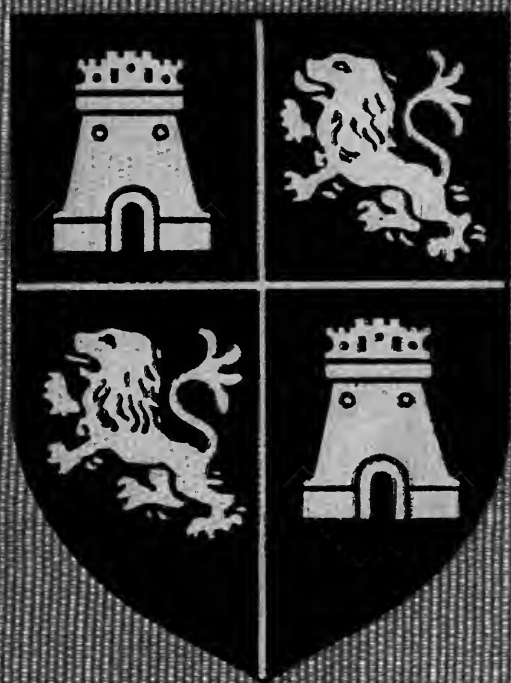


AN ARTIST IN SPAIN



A·C·MICHAEL

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EL PASE POR ALTO

AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED

BY

A · C · MICHAEL

*Si me pierdo, que me busquen
En el sol del mediodía,
Donde lo moreno nace
Y donde la sal se cria*



HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON · NEW YORK · TORONTO

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SOUTHWARD

CHAPTER I

SOUTHWARD

THIS was how it came about.

From a nail in the studio wall hung a venerable wineskin, well blackened by the perpetual exudation of the heady Manchegan wine which it had carried in those happy days when it swung from a pack-saddle and roamed the great plains in company with a Castilian muleteer, its former master. So dry had it become through long emptiness, that it had shrunk into the merest mummy of its former rotund self; and such was the pathos of its aspect that it attracted the attention of our commiserating eyes. Poor neglected friend! How often, in the old days, when our throats were parched by the burning sun of Spain, had we cooled them with a draught of its refreshing contents, holding it on high and letting the purple stream gurgle and trickle deliciously down our gullets! Thus we reflected, and waxing sentimental, a longing came upon us to revisit the old scenes; the temptation became too strong to resist, and we decided to set out. We immediately wrote to H——, a jovial Gascon artist who had been the companion of our previous wanderings in the Peninsula, and who we felt sure would need little persuasion to accompany us once more. We were not mistaken, for the return mail

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brought us a letter from Paris, in which our friend expressed enthusiastic approbation of the scheme.

Within a week we had crossed the Channel, and, on our arrival at Paris, were met by H——, plump and exuberant as ever. At the Douane our troubles began. The Douanier who was charged with the examination of our luggage was one of those offensive Republican officials who, by acts of petty tyranny, think to emphasise the dignity of their position. The discovery of some photographic materials rendered him apoplectic with excitement, and, with folded arms and wagging head, he opened upon us the floodgates of his Gallic eloquence. ‘Eh ! ben alors ! c’est épatant !’ cried he. ‘Here you tell me that you have nothing to declare, and I discover these articles, which appear to me to be of a highly suspicious nature.’ Our assurance that the innocent boxes contained nothing but sensitized plates was unavailing ; he suspected contraband, and would disembowel them on the spot. H—— came to the rescue, and our combined diplomacy at length brought the aggressive official to a more reasonable frame of mind. Shrugging his shoulders, he left us and was soon paying his unwelcome attentions to other unfortunate travellers. The next morning saw us speeding southwards, en route for Hendaye, the little French frontier town where we intended spending a few days before pursuing our journey into Spain. The roaring express hurried us through the fat green acres of Touraine and Poitou, that smiled monotonously under the July sun, wearying us and making us long for the dolorous expanse of the Landes, and the great lamenting

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pine-woods, through which we must pass before reaching that sterner country which lies beyond the Pyrenees. As we approached our destination, I fell into a heavy sleep, from which I was suddenly awakened by H——, who, bringing his palm down with a resounding thwack on my knee, leapt up, snapped his fingers and pirouetted thrice, balancing his portly form on the points of his toes.

The cause of his excitement was obvious, for those dark masses which loomed against the starlit sky were the Pyrenees, at whose feet he had passed his childhood.

Within a short time we had espied the lights of Hendaye, and H—— hurriedly started to collect his numerous packages, for, like all Southerners, he has a marked predilection for hand luggage. There were paint-boxes and sketching easels, bags, baskets, and paper parcels, and last but not least, in its leathern case, the guitar which always accompanies him on his travels, and on which he is a notable performer. The train glided into the station, and we got down to find ourselves among a crowd of men and women, talking volubly in bad Spanish, mingled with worse French, for every one here is bi-lingual. All the men wore the national 'boina,' a sort of diminutive tam-o'-shanter, made of dark blue cloth, but lacking that bob which usually adorns the Scottish headgear. We noted that the true 'blood' sported a 'boina' of the tiniest dimensions, which he posed rakishly on the back of his close-cropped bullet head. Beyond this, there was nothing remarkable in the costume of either men or women. Most of the people in these parts have fair

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complexions, whilst their faces present the usual national characteristics, the long hooked nose and small piercing eyes. On leaving the station, we were besieged by a swarm of hotel touts, who contended most ferociously for our patronage, abusing each other in French, Spanish, and Vascuence, which, for vituperative purposes, is almost as effective as Welsh. Having freed ourselves from these pests, we got into a 'bus and were driven to a modest hotel, where, for an inclusive sum per diem, we were lodged and regaled with food and wine, this latter being of an acidity so pungent, that even now we shudder to think of it. We shared our quarters with swarms of mosquitoes of exceptional size and virulence, but a still greater nuisance was the common house-fly, which was so abundant that we were obliged to eat and drink with the greatest circumspection. The following morning we sallied forth, eager to feel once more the scorching rays of the Southern sun. We prowled the streets of Hendaye, but found nothing of particular interest. There are a few old houses, but most of the town consists of small villas, which are occupied by French families during the bathing season. About a mile off there is a fine beach, which is disfigured by several large modern hotels. We descended to the margin of the Bidassoa, where we stopped to look across at Fuenterrabia, girt with its siege-scarred walls. The once picturesque aspect of the little border town is now completely marred by several enormous structures of brick which rise from its river front, barrack-like and hideous.

These architectural fungi are the convents erected

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by French religious societies, who, after their expulsion, settled upon the Spanish side of the Bidassoa, choosing a position whence they could uninterruptedly gaze across at that *chère patrie* which means so much to every Frenchman.

Anxious to become more closely acquainted with Fuenterrabia, we arranged with a boatman to convey us to the other side. This was not accomplished without much chaffering, for the fellow was as grasping and hardheaded as are the Basques in general, who, it is said, can drive nails into a stone wall, using their heads in lieu of hammers. These boatmen of Hendaye have always a copious stock of smuggling yarns, with which they delight the ears of Gallic tourists, who, all agog for 'quelque chose qui a du caractère,' gulp down the highly coloured fabrications with unquestioning credulity. Our man proved no exception to the rule, for no sooner were we seated in the boat, than he opened the subject by pointing out, on the neighbouring heights, the watch towers used by the carabineros for the prevention of the contraband trade. Then he regaled us with tales of smuggling adventures, in all of which he seemed to have played a part of conspicuous heroism, and after that, his imagination becoming more inflamed, he told of men who had rolled to their deaths down awful precipices, of murdered carabineros, and of thrilling escapes from justice. Arriving at our destination, we took leave of this bold contrabandista, who received our congratulations on his exploits with becoming modesty. Strolling up a shady avenue, we now passed through an ancient gateway, which

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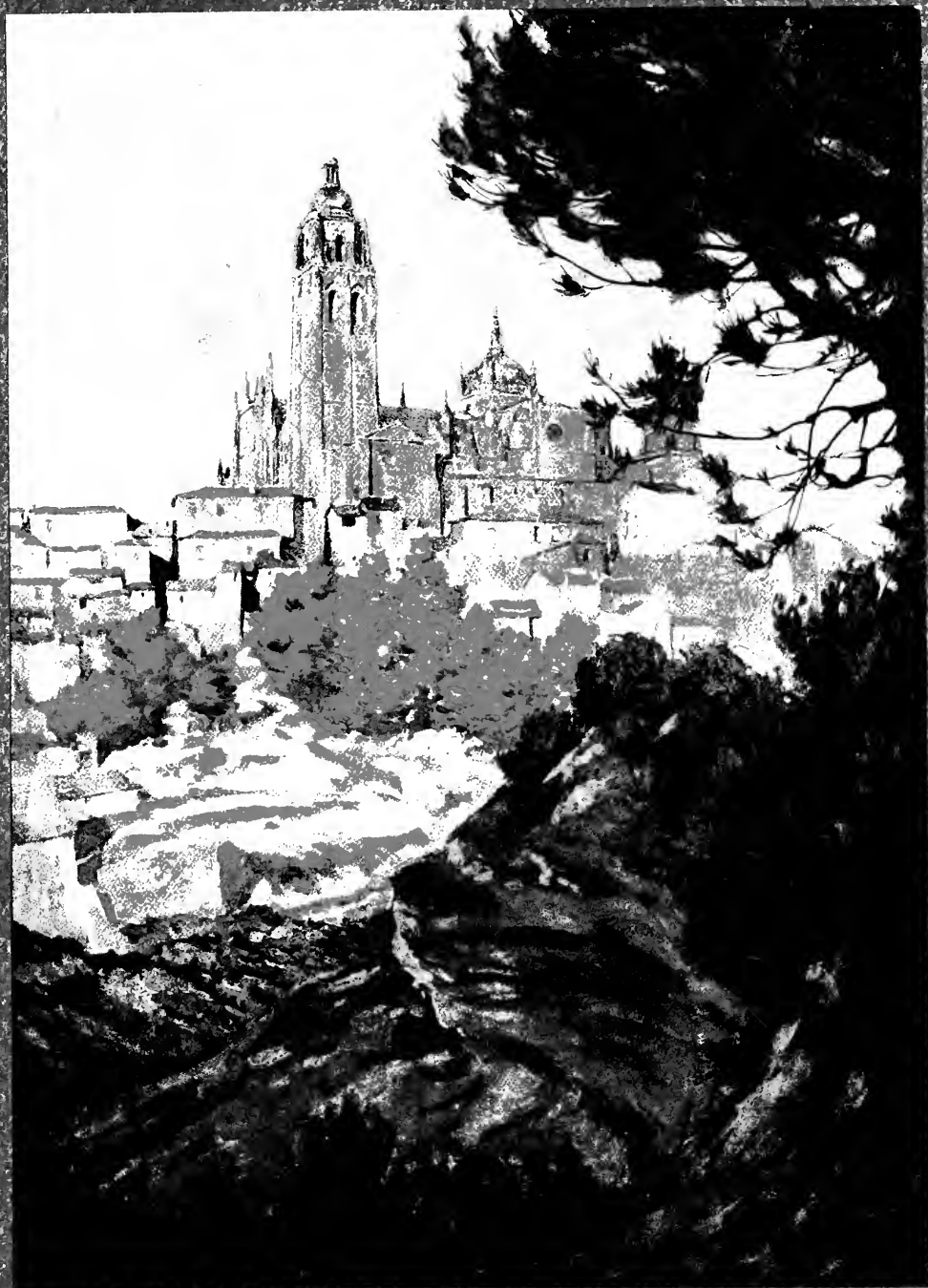
displayed an enormous escutcheon, bearing the municipal arms, prominent among which was the figure of an angel, with a key ; for Fuenterrabia boasts that she holds the key of Spain. On entering the town, we immediately experienced a sensation of disappointment, for the place has a chromo-lithographic German-Swiss aspect, and its buildings, with their wide, richly carved eaves, and over-decorated façades, fail to please, like the simpler old mansions of Castile and Andalucia.

We made our way up the principal street, through a multitude of chattering French tourists, and at length found ourselves before the door of a ruined castle, on which was a notice, written in Spanish, French, and English, the latter version running thus :—‘CASTLE OF CHARLES V., CAN SEE HIMSELF BY 25 CENTS, ALSO SELL HIMSELF.’

Attracted by this bizarre announcement, we entered, but found little of interest save an old courtyard, enclosed by massive walls, crumbling and ivyclad. By means of a decaying wooden staircase, which shook under us in a most alarming manner, we mounted to the terrace, and thence obtained a clear prospect of the surrounding country. The most prominent object in the town below us was the church, from whose steeple was fired the rocket which gave the signal for the advance on that fateful October morning of the year 1813, when the allied armies, under Wellington, crossed the Bidassoa and carried the war into the enemies’ country. After leaving the old castle we continued our exploration of the town. Passing down a narrow street, flanked by mouldering sixteenth-century houses, whose

SEGOVIA CATHEDRAL





SOUTHWARD

worm-eaten balconies were draped with ragged household linen, evidently hung there to dry, though its appearance gave no indication of a recent wash. Among the old fortifications we came upon a number of boys playing their national game of Pelota. The youth of Northern Spain display remarkable skill and agility at this game, and such is their passion for it that most churches and public buildings bear a notice, prohibiting the use of their façades as Pelota courts. Leaving Fuenterrabia we walked to Irun, the Spanish frontier town, and thence back to Hendaye, passing on the way the famous Island of the Pheasants. It was here, before the Conference of 1659, between the plenipotentiaries of France and Spain, which resulted in the Treaty of the Pyrenees, that Velasquez, whilst supervising the decoration of the Spanish Pavilion, took a fever, of which he ultimately died, sacrificed, as Richard Ford puts it, on the altar of upholstery.

One morning unusual excitement prevailed in the diminutive Plaza of Hendaye. The citizens, gathered in little groups, were talking and gesticulating with unwonted animation, whilst the proprietors of the surrounding cafés were superintending the arrangement of a vast number of tables and chairs in front of their establishments. On inquiring the cause of this commotion, we were told that a grand fête was in preparation for that night, whose crowning attraction was to be a 'Toro de Fuego.' At nightfall, therefore, we hastened to the Plaza, to find it thronged with townsfolk and gay with Chinese lanterns, while the bandstand which stood in its centre was occupied by

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the members of the town band, playing a selection of lively popular airs. Mingling with the crowd, we strolled about, impatient for the opening of the ceremony, nor had we to wait long, for soon there broke on our ears an ominous and ever-swelling uproar, borne, it would seem, along an alley which debouched on the Plaza. The mouth of this alley suddenly flared with a crimson glow. A deafening roar of exploding fireworks was followed by a chorus of shrieks, shouts, and laughter. The crowd divided in confusion, disclosing to our startled gaze the apparition of a gigantic bull. With flaming eyes he charged down upon us. We made our escape, tumbling over each other, pell-mell. Our panic, however, was but momentary, for we recognised him as the 'Toro de Fuego,' the *fire-bull*, with his pasteboard body and two pairs of obviously human legs. Already the fireworks with which he was covered had started to explode, ejecting showers of sparks in every direction.

Round and round the Plaza rushed this serio-comic beast, charging recklessly among the café tables, whose occupants rose and fled precipitately. Tables were overturned, bottles and glasses smashed to atoms, but nothing could stop his headlong career. And now the excitement increased, for the trees around the little square were connected by festoons of squibs, which having been ignited, started to add their quota to the infernal din. A final ear-splitting bang announced that the fire-bull's ammunition had come to an end, the squibs fizzled out, and the band struck up the joyous Jota Aragonesa. A space was soon cleared

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around the bandstand, and the lads took their partners for the dance. Facing each other with upraised arms, they went through the lively and graceful figures of the Jota, and then, as the music slowed down to the copla, the couples approached each other and started to waltz. Thus, with dancing and much good-natured horse-play, the hours slipped by, and it was well past midnight when the little Plaza gradually emptied, and resumed its normal aspect.

The weather, which is always uncertain in this part of the world, broke up a few days after our arrival, which decided us to proceed on our journey southwards, for when once the sun is hidden and the mountains are shrouded in mist, few more depressing places can be imagined than Hendaye. We therefore arose betimes one morning and took train for Segovia. In a few minutes we reached Irun, where luggage is examined and the traveller changes trains, pursuing his journey in the comfortable broad-gauge coaches of the Compañía del Norte. How typical is the first question put to the traveller in the Spanish custom-house: 'Tiene Vd algo nuevo, Señor?' 'Have you anything new?' inquires the white-gloved frontier guardian of the country, which has always been and always will be the arch-enemy of innovations. On this occasion one poor Spaniard was called to account because of several sets of new underwear which his trunk was found to contain. These articles which, striped in vivid colours, were evidently the *dernier cri* of Parisian fashion, were produced in triumph by the searching carabinero and laid before his superior officers, who,

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after having considered them with the utmost gravity, pronounced them to be unworn, and therefore dutiable. Vain were the oaths and protestations of the disconsolate Don; the carabineros were courteous but unmoved, and he, seeing that he must pay the duty or lose his finery, chose the former alternative and went his way. Luckier than our fellow-passenger, we were allowed to pass unmolested, and had soon taken our seats in the Segovia express, justly styled 'El Rápido,' for at times it races along at a speed of twenty-five miles an hour.

We shared the compartment with a Spaniard who in the profusion of his hand luggage rivalled our Gascon friend. With southern courtesy they helped each other to arrange their many packages, which occupied the racks, the vacant seats, and no small portion of the adjacent corridor.

During a long railway journey we have often amused ourselves by studying the national characteristics of our fellow-passengers.

The British traveller settles himself luxuriously leaning back and crossing his long legs. In this position he will remain for hours, his nose buried in a newspaper or magazine, his immobility bearing witness to his insular phlegm. The Frenchman, on the contrary, finds movement and conversation a positive necessity, and the artistic proclivities of the race are typified by his vociferous appreciation of the scenery. The Spaniard, however (and our fellow-traveller behaved in a manner typical of his compatriots), is completely indifferent to the beauties of the landscape, his first thought being to lower the blinds of the compartment,

SOUTHWARD

thus securing himself against the penetrating rays of the sun. He doffs collar, coat, and waistcoat, endeavouring to put himself at his ease, but soon shows by his restlessness that the idea of being a prisoner in the train for a certain number of hours is jarring upon his nerves, for the Spaniard is always impatient of restraint, even idleness, when enforced, having few attractions for him. It is a mistake, however, to imagine that he is really lazy; he simply objects to work because it is work: when it is presented to him in another form he will display astonishing energy.

The train crept through the wooded valleys of Guipúzcoa, bearing us towards the Castilian plains, which we entered about noon, leaving behind us the little village of Pancorbo, mouldering at the base of a sierra whose summit is crowned by fantastic pinnacles of rock, looking like Titanic fingers stretching skywards. The crops had been cut and gathered in, leaving the great stubby flats bare and dusty. Their unbroken surface extended to the foot of the distant Cordilleras, whose phantom outlines, scarcely visible through the vibrating heat mist, bounded the horizon. From time to time we caught a glimpse of a highway traversing the waste and looking like a white ribbon blowing out in the breeze. Along it lumbered heavy carros, drawn by files of mules, all powdered with the dust which rose in clouds as they advanced. Near the villages, which were hardly distinguishable from the ground on which they stood (so much did they resemble it in colour), were the only trees which graced this tawny wilderness, namely, a few poplars, tall and vividly green.

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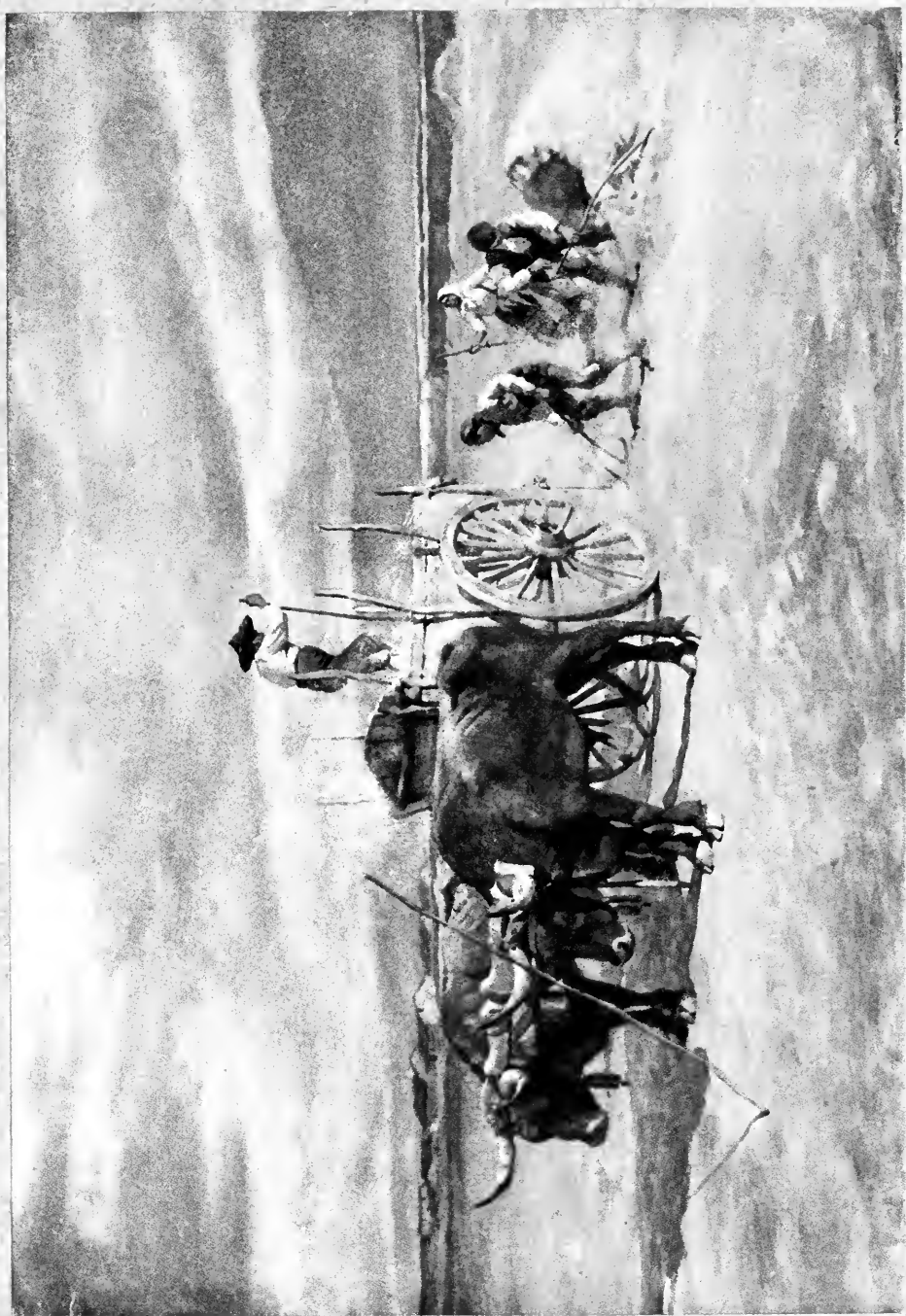
The Spanish peasant is the ruthless destroyer of all trees, for they harbour the birds which eat his crops. The poplar, however, he sometimes spares, believing in a legend which says that it was the first form of vegetation created by the Almighty, and therefore is entitled to uncommon respect. The villagers, hard at work on the threshing-floors, drove teams of mules and oxen round and round, treading out the corn in a manner already ancient in the days of Abraham. We left the grey towers of Burgos on our right, and a couple of hours later drew up at the station of Valladolid, a big straggling town, dirty and uninteresting. At the station our ears were greeted by the old familiar cry of 'Bonbones y chocolates de Matias Lopez !' for the seller of these sweetmeats is as typical a figure on Spanish railway platforms as Smith's newsboy is on ours, Spaniards preferring sweetstuffs to literature. We passed Olmedo ensconced within its crenellated walls, and entered the pine-wood of Nieva, the trees with their spreading tops and branchless trunks looking like giant umbrellas and making fantastic silhouettes against the rosy glory of the western sky. Night had fallen before we arrived at Segovia, where, leaving the train, we took our places in an antediluvian omnibus drawn by a trio of bony mules. With a merry jingling of bells we set off, the animals urged to a gallop by the shouts of the driver and the loud cracking of the whip. We bumped and jolted down an ill-made road, flanked by old and ruinous houses, and, dashing down a steep hill, passed under the famous Roman aqueduct, which towered high above us, its upper arches lost in the obscurity of the night. We continued our course,

SOUTHWARD

rattling over the cobbles of narrow and gloomy streets. Suddenly our driver pulled up, and descending from his box informed us that the rest of the journey had to be performed on foot. We got down and found ourselves in the mouth of a street, whence we looked into a Plaza brilliantly lighted and thronged with people who were promenading and listening to the lively strains of a military band. Amongst the crowd were a number of cadets of the school of artillery, their smart grey uniforms conspicuous among the more sombre habits of the civilians. Around three sides of the Plaza ran a loggia supporting the projecting first stories of venerable houses, while the fourth was occupied by the walls and buttresses of a Gothic cathedral. We made our way through the crowd, and plunging into a gloomy alley, whose atmosphere was heavy with the nauseating odour of rancid oil, soon found ourselves before the door of our hostelry, the Fonda del Comercio.

WORKERS IN THE FIELDS, PROVINCE OF SEGOVIA.

WORKERS IN THE FIBRE INDUSTRY



SEGOVIA

CHAPTER II

SEGOVIA

SEGOVIA occupies a lofty eminence between the converging courses of two small rivers, one flowing through a fertile valley and the other through a deep and narrow ravine. This eminence has more or less the form of a fish, and the part which corresponds to the tail terminates in a wedge-shaped rock, beneath whose precipitous walls the rivers join their waters. From the summit of this rock rises the Alcázar, cutting the blue sky with its fantastic towers and pinnacles, and looking like a great galleon sailing out into the west.

In mediæval times Segovia was a strong town, for the sides of the eminence on which it sits are precipitous save at one spot, a point corresponding to the fish's mouth, and furthermore, the town is defended by a belt of imposing walls strengthened with eighty-three towers. Situated near the centre of the city and completely dominating it stands the cathedral, which has the distinction of being the last of the great ecclesiastical edifices of Spain to be built in the Gothic style. But the wonder of Segovia is the Roman aqueduct, which, entering the town at the point furthest from the Alcázar, crosses the adjoining valley in a series of one hundred and nineteen stupendous arches. The exact date of this astonishing work is unknown, but it is

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probable that it was carried out during the reign of Augustus.

Antiquarians have, for many years, been trying to settle this point, by reconstructing a bronze inscription which the Aqueduct formerly bore, but of which nothing now remains but the nail holes. As is to be supposed, the results obtained by the learned gentlemen who go to work on so vague a basis are so at variance that we are as yet no nearer the truth. But whatever its period, this Titanic work compels our admiration. Its two tiers of arches, which in the centre reach a height of over 100 feet, are constructed of enormous blocks of grey granite without cement or mortar. In the eleventh century, when Segovia was sacked by the Moors, a number of these arches were destroyed, but were afterwards restored by order of Isabella the Catholic, who commissioned a Segovian monk, by name Juan Escovedo, to carry out the work. After having completed his task, in a manner so admirable that to-day it is well nigh impossible to distinguish the new arches from the old, he was rewarded by Isabella with all the wood which had been used in the scaffolding.

After arriving at Segovia our first visit was to the cathedral, which, like all Spanish churches, seems to be frequented by three classes of people: those who are genuinely religious, those who make a parade of religion for ulterior motives, and those who find a place of worship the coolest in which to sleep out the siesta—the latter class being conspicuously in the majority.

This cathedral was built in 1525 by Gil de Ontañon

SEGOVIA

and his son Rodrigo, and is similar in many respects to the new cathedral of Salamanca, which was also the work of these architects. The old cathedral, which occupied the same site, was burnt down during the mobocracy of 1520, sharing the fate of many another edifice, noble and otherwise. Luckily the elegant cloisters escaped, and being taken down were re-erected to form part of the new cathedral, with which they harmonise admirably. Therein is to be seen the tomb of Maria del Saltox, a person much revered by the Segovians. She lived in the thirteenth century and was by nationality a Jewess. Accused of adultery, she was condemned to be hurled from the cliff above Fuencisla, Segovia's Tarpeian rock. The good citizens turned out in force to witness the execution of the sentence, for they naturally made occasions such as these the excuse for a 'Dia de Fiesta.' This time, however, the multitude got a double thrill, for at the moment of being cast from the rock, Maria, forsaking the God of her fathers, called on the Virgin Mary, with the result that her fall was checked in mid-air and she floated gently to the ground, as though suspended from an invisible parachute. Needless to say the exact spot of her descent is still pointed out, while hard by in the chapel of the Fuencisla is the identical image of the Virgin by whose agency the miracle was performed.

Another interesting tomb in the cloisters is that of Pedro, the infant son of Henry II., who was allowed to fall by a careless nurse from one of the windows of the Alcázar. In this case, however, no miracle was

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performed and the nurse forestalled her certain punishment by promptly throwing herself after her royal charge.

In front of the cathedral is the picturesque Plaza Mayor, which once a week, on market day, is thronged with peasants from the surrounding villages wearing the old Segovian costume. The men, most of whom have fine characteristic faces, wear a short jacket, knee breeches of black velvet and shoes of the same material. They encircle their heads with a dark-coloured handkerchief, over which they wear a big black sombrero, having an upturned brim and conical crown adorned with small pompons. This curious headgear is kept on by a broad strap passing under the chin. The outer seam of the breeches is ornamented with a row of small metal buttons extending from hip to knee, the last half dozen being left unfastened to display a puff of white linen underwear. The stockings are almost invariably black. The women, as is usual in Spain, are not as good-looking as the men, and their workaday clothes are in no way remarkable. On fête days, however, many of them appear in a very elaborate costume, the most curious part of which is an embroidered head-dress, in shape not unlike a bishop's mitre, crowned by a large worsted pompon.

The picturesqueness of Segovia and its peasantry has made it a favourite resort of artists, who find ample studio room in some of its spacious old houses, while one celebrated Spanish painter has become possessed of a magnificent old Romanesque church, where during the summer months he paints those characteristic

SEGOVIA

pictures of Spanish life for which he is particularly noted.

The Alcázar, one of the finest mediæval castles in the Peninsula, is not only famous as having been the prison of Le Sage's hero Gil Blas, for from it Isabella the Catholic rode forth to be proclaimed Queen of Castile, while its resistance to the Comuneros earned it the approbation of Charles v. and its hospitality that of Charles I. of England, who, according to the chronicle, was royally entertained therein, making a hearty meal on 'certaine trouts of extraordinary greatnesse.' After passing through many vicissitudes it was partially destroyed by a fire in 1862, caused, it is said, by the military cadets who lodged within its walls, who with characteristic vandalism chose that way of protesting against the incommodity of their quarters. Thus, the Alcázar, one of the few stately buildings in Spain which escaped the French invader, was wantonly destroyed by the hands of Spaniards. The fire almost entirely consumed the magnificent decorations of the interior on which so much care had been lavished by Charles v. and Philip II., besides seriously damaging the exterior, which has since been carefully restored, though from an artist's point of view the restoration is far too obvious.

Segovia is exceptionally rich in fine old churches, though many of them are in a sadly ruinous condition. The majority are in the Romanesque style, of which there are some notable examples. Three of these particularly attracted our attention, San Estéban, San Martin and San Millán, on account of their quaint external cloisters, while a fourth, the Vera Cruz, which

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is situated outside Segovia, near the scene of the miraculous leap of María, is one of those rare circular structures erected by the Knights Templars in imitation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. In the centre of this little church, which is built with the simple solidity characteristic of the Romanesque style, is a curious circular chapel, or rather two chapels, one above the other, around which the nave forms a kind of aisle.

The paintings which once adorned the reredos have now almost entirely disappeared, but a few eight-pointed crimson crosses still remain to recall the heroic but ill-fated order to which the building owed its erection. A piece of the True Cross was formerly treasured herein, but on the removal of this potent relic, in the middle of the seventeenth century, the church ceased to be a place of worship, and was thenceforth abandoned to decay.

Close by, in a sheltered and fertile spot beside the sparkling waters of the Eresma, another melancholy sight presents itself to the eyes of the sentimental traveller, for here amid weeds and brambles rise the ruins of the once magnificent monastery of 'El Parral.' Founded towards the close of the fifteenth century by Pacheco, the powerful and greedy Marquis of Villena, whose magnificent monument adorns the church, it has long been deserted by the Jeronymite friars who once inhabited it. In its crumbling cloisters the bat and the owl find refuge, and its gardens, once celebrated in popular diction as an earthly paradise, are now unkempt and desolate.

VILLAGE IN SORIA



SEGOVIA

Francis Willughby, an English traveller of the seventeenth century, speaking of the Spaniards, says ' Their children are the most unmannerly and ill-bred of any in the world,' and I am entirely of his opinion, at least as regards the brats of Segovia. Clamorously demanding cigarettes and halfpence, they swarm about the unfortunate stranger, who finds it impossible to escape them either in church or café, while if he be so ill-advised as to give them anything he will never afterwards be free from their importunities. Nor is this mendicancy entirely confined to the children of the poor, for their example is often imitated by those of the lower middle class, whose parents are either too slothful or too apathetic to correct them. But the evil does not end here, for no sooner has the traveller got rid of this impudent swarm of juvenility than he is beset by a battalion of professional mendicants, who, in Segovia, enjoy all the liberty of action which in less recent times was accorded them throughout the Peninsula. In a moment he is surrounded, and finding it impossible either to advance or retreat, he is forced willy-nilly to contemplate the horrible sores and ghastly deformities which are exposed for his edification. The number of these unsavoury pests is only less astonishing than the variety and singularity of their diseases and malformations. But the most formidable type is the legless wretch, who, strapped to a low wooden trolley which he propels by pawing the ground, comes rattling along over the cobbles at a speed which makes it impossible to escape him.

Segovia possesses one of the most important military

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colleges of Spain and the town is thronged with cadets who swagger through the winding streets swelling with pride in their smart grey uniforms, and taking the wall of the passer-by in a way calculated to astonish the natives of other countries where less mediæval manners prevail. Many of these young gentleman fancy themselves as amateur bullfighters, and every year a small 'corrida' is organised, which enables them to display their skill to an audience largely composed of comrades and relatives. The bulls fought are 'becerros,' under two years old, although it is only fair to state that even at that age some of them have developed a formidable pair of horns. We were present at one of these functions, but the exhibition given by these aristocratic amateurs was such as to force us to the conclusion that the sport is more befitting the sturdy lower classes, whose nerves are not so readily effected. Many Spanish Societies celebrate an annual 'Becerrada' of this sort, and one that never fails to be amusing is that organised by the waiters of Madrid, some of whom display extraordinary tauromachic skill. Owing to the exigencies of their profession the fiesta takes place at five o'clock in the morning, but despite the early hour the Plaza is invariably thronged with spectators, among whom may be seen many notabilities.

During the summer months Segovia is enlivened by the presence of a number of fashionable people, most of them friends or relations of the military cadets. Then in the evening the quaint old Plaza Mayor echoes to the strains of a military band, and the élite of Segovian society streams forth to enjoy the music while pro-

SEGOVIA

menading in stately procession or sipping cool beverages before the cafés under the surrounding loggia. In one of these cafés a nightly recital was given by a blind guitarist, who attracted considerable audiences by his skill and his original manner of performing on the instrument, which he played left-handed and held upside down. Highly typical of Spain was the manner in which the musician was remunerated—a bottle of sherry being raffled for his benefit at the conclusion of each performance. We soon struck up an acquaintance with this topsy-turvy guitarist, who told us that for a number of years he had made a comfortable livelihood in this way, being well known in most of the towns and villages of Castile. He would often drop round to our Fonda during the afternoon, when he and H—— would entertain us with impromptu duets. He was a gay little fellow, taking his affliction very philosophically, though he seemed utterly devoid of the sense of locality generally possessed by the blind, and in fact feared to make the slightest movement unless he were led. One day another blind man made his appearance, a fat, merry fellow, led by a boy as fat and merry as himself. He made a substantial living by going the round of the cafés and fondas raffling various small articles, such as boxes of perfume, scented soap, etc. He soon became friendly with the musician, and the two unfortunates could often be seen playing dominoes in a café, surrounded by a group of amused spectators who laid wagers on the result.

On several occasions we went to paint in the patio of a romantic and ruinous mansion, once, if tradition

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can be relied on, the residence of the great Don Álvaro de Luna. It was inhabited by a poor 'carbonero' or seller of coal, a veritable Benedict Mol, who for years past had been burrowing in the cellars of the old place, firmly convinced that they contained buried hoards of fabulous value. Though his labours had been entirely fruitless, he continued them undismayed, and would discourse for hours on the subject nearest to his heart, telling us of all the fine things that he would do when once the coveted treasure had been unearthed. His ideal of luxury seemed to be a house with sky blue ceilings and an electric piano, and these, he told us, were the very first things that he would buy. We often bantered him about his burrowing, and on one occasion succeeded in dismounting him from his extraordinary hobby-horse by telling him frankly that, in our opinion, he was wasting his time. At this, his grimy countenance assumed such a comical expression of dismay that we instantly repented of our brutality, and always afterwards feigned to be as enthusiastic in the treasure hunt as himself. Another of our curious acquaintances was a drunken old reprobate, an inhabitant of a neighbouring village, one of the most mournful and desolate places imaginable, perched on a barren, treeless upland, exposed in summer to the scorching Castilian sun and in winter to the icy blasts which sweep down remorselessly from the neighbouring peaks of the Guadarrama.

Whenever we happened to be sketching in or around this village, the old ruffian, who, it turned out, was a renegade priest, was sure to make his appearance.

SEGOVIA

After criticising our work with more frankness than delicacy, he would settle himself comfortably in our immediate vicinity, slumbering or regaling us with reminiscences. His appearance was repulsive in the extreme, for a paralytic stroke following a particularly hard drinking bout had left one side of his face immovable, the eye glaring out with a horrible fixity, while the mouth was distorted into a permanent ghastly grin, making him resemble nothing so much as an animated gargoyle. If he ventured into Segovia, he was rendered desperate by a swarm of youthful wags, who followed him everywhere, diverting themselves by cracking ribald jokes at his expense. He often complained bitterly to us of this persecution, and once, when more inebriated than usual, produced an ugly 'navaja,' and while rolling his movable orb, described with horrible minuteness the nature of the vengeance he would one day wreak upon his tormentors.

SALAMANCA

OLD HOUSES, ALMAZÁN, SORIA

OLD HOLMES & WATSON



CHAPTER III

SALAMANCA

LEAVING Segovia we set out for Salamanca, returning over the same route that we had already traversed as far as Medina del Campo, whence a branch line conveyed us to our destination. At Medina a misfortune befell us; we lost our trunk, which the station authorities had neglected to take out of the train, and was therefore carried on towards the frontier. Though it was returned to us on the following evening, the mishap was a humiliating one, for it afforded H——, whom we had hitherto bantered unmercifully about his predilection for hand luggage, an opportunity to return that banter with interest. Medina del Campo, which to-day is more remarkable for the sleepiness and inefficiency of its railway officials than anything else, was once a considerable city and a seat of the Castilian Court, boasting a population of more than 50,000 souls. Since its almost complete destruction by the Comuneros in 1520, it never recovered its former importance, and also suffered severely at the hands of the invading Gaul, who passed this way, committing his usual depredations. It is built on the swampy banks of the Zapardiel, a river described by a sixteenth-century writer as being ‘so deepe and dangerous that geese in

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summer go over it dry-footed.' Near by rise the ruins of the castle of La Mota, wherein Isabella the Catholic died in the year 1504.

Towards evening we caught our first glimpse of Salamanca, gleaming like a city of coral in the soft rose light of the setting sun. Outside the station we reviewed the ramshackle buses belonging to the various hotels, uncertain which to patronise. On the box of one of them, however, sat the fattest, jolliest coachman imaginable, who, raising his face from the huge slice of water melon at which he was sucking, beamed at us so genially that he positively charmed us into his vehicle. Nor were we disappointed in the Fonda to which he conducted us, finding it excellent in every respect.

The next morning we set out to explore Salamanca, starting with the famous Plaza Mayor, which was within a few steps of the Fonda. We had already heard that it was the finest square of its kind in Spain, and in every way it came up to our expectations. Not the least striking of its beauties is the subtle warm cream colour of the stone with which the surrounding buildings are constructed. Under the first stories of these buildings, which date from the beginning of the eighteenth century, runs an arcade which completely surrounds the Plaza and under which are situated the principal shops of the city. In the spandrels of the arches are raised tablets on which are carved in low relief the busts of the great men of Spain. There were evidently, however, not enough to go round, for many of the tablets remain uncut. At one end of the Plaza is a building which stands higher and is more ornate than its fellows, this is

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the Ayuntamiento or Town Hall. Formerly bull-fights were held in this square, but now the centre is laid out in gardens, where, in the afternoon, under the deep shade of the acacias sit the 'Charros' or Salamancan peasants reposing after the turmoil of the morning's market. The country folk of the province of Salamanca are proverbial for their honesty, simplicity and hospitality. The men, some of whom are exceedingly handsome, are remarkable for the extreme solemnity of their deportment. They are swarthy as Moors, and prematurely wrinkled by continual exposure to the blazing sun and biting wind, for the treeless country affords no shelter to either man or beast. We noted that many of them had crisp curly hair, a thing not often seen in Spain. The 'Charro' does not wear the pointed sombrero favoured by the Segovians, but shelters himself beneath a high-crowned broad-brimmed black felt of puritanical aspect, which naturally enhances the gravity of his mien.

His black velvet waistcoat is cut low and square, the better to display his spotless pleated shirt, and is adorned with a double row of large metal buttons; his short coat and tight knee-breeches of good black cloth being also adorned with buttons and trimmed with velvet. Unlike the peasants of the rest of Spain, he does not wear the 'faja' or sash, but girds his loins with a broad leathern belt, or 'cinto.' Many of the wealthier farmers still wear the old-fashioned 'polainas,' or leggings, of black embroidered leather, which are attached below the knee and above the ankle, the middle part being left open to expose the calf. They make strikingly picturesque and

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old-world figures as they ride into market bestriding their handsome mules, whose leather trappings are profusely adorned with brazen bosses.

Unfortunately the women of Salamanca have, as in Segovia, entirely discarded their picturesque costume, except on festive occasions, when they replace their sober everyday attire with dresses handsomely embroidered in gold and silver and deck themselves with jewellery, often of great value and considerable antiquity.

In the Plaza were many gipsy 'Chalanes' or horse dealers, whose cunning oriental faces contrasted strongly with those of the honest 'Charros.' Several of them were evidently from Andalucia, and wore the rakish Cordobés sombrero, short jacket and typical velvet trousers, full in the leg but tight over the hips and round the ankle. They all carried the long whip, without which no self-respecting 'gitano' walks abroad. The gipsies of Spain are split into three groups : those of Castile, those of La Mancha and those of Andalucia. The members of the two former groups lead comparatively respectable lives, often plying the trades of blacksmith and basket-maker, and these heartily condemn the manner of living of their brethren of Andalucia, whose thievish propensities, they say, bring the whole of the race into disrepute. Those of Andalucia, on the other hand, sneer at their northern brethren, despising them for their lack of wit and cunning, and reproaching them with the impurity of their blood, which has been largely mixed with that of the Gentiles. The northern gipsies too have discarded those peculiarities of dress which distinguish the southerners, whose

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women are remarkable for the extreme gaudiness of their apparel and the eccentricity of their coiffure. A thieving gitano, when caught red-handed by the Civil Guard, is sometimes punished in a novel manner. After shaving his head they set him at liberty, knowing full well that he will straightway run off and hide himself, taking care not to reappear in public until his inky tresses have regained their normal luxuriance, for he regards their loss with superstitious horror, and often cannot be persuaded to re-enter the town wherein he has been so treated.

The gipsy language or 'Caló,' which so much interested George Borrow, is fast dying out, the present generation contenting themselves with interlarding their Spanish with a few words or phrases of the old tongue, while I doubt if in all Spain a single gipsy can be found who is capable of doing more than this.

Continuing our explorations of the city, we soon found ourselves in a great square, neglected and grass-grown, on whose farther side towered the great bulk of the new Cathedral. Crossing this square, which was deserted save for the presence of two drowsy priests, who sat fanning themselves in the shade of the acacias, we entered the sacred precincts. It is a fine building, impressive by reason of its loftiness and elegant proportions, but in no way as interesting as the old Cathedral which adjoins it, and into which one descends by a flight of steps. This massive building, half church, half fortress, was built by one Gerónimo, a Frenchman who had the supreme distinction of being the confessor of the mighty Cid, and who lies buried beneath the

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pavement of one of its chapels. It is now empty and neglected, for in the year 1560 the cult was transferred to the new cathedral, which had just been built on the plans of Gil Juan de Ontañón. Little can be seen of the exterior of the old cathedral, but that of the new is, on the whole, exceedingly fine, especially the magnificent west front, which when gilded by the afternoon sun is a sight not soon to be forgotten. Close by is the University, founded by Alonzo ix. and incorporated with the older University of Palencia in 1243. It soon won renown, and hither flocked students from all civilised parts of the world. In the fifteenth century their numbers had reached near 14,000 and numerous colleges had been erected and endowed. So great indeed was the number of these buildings that it was commonly said that even 'Old Nick' had his own particular establishment, wherein students of the occult sciences completed their studies. Furthermore, it was said, that as all these gentlemen had naturally bartered their souls, they were not allowed to pass out without leaving certain of their number with him as surety.

What a motley crew they must have been, these students of Salamanca! They were of all classes and all nations. There were the rich and aristocratic, who studied in the greater colleges—*colegios mayores*—of which there were four. It was sufficient to be a member of one of these to obtain immediate preferment in either Church or State. For this reason they were naturally monopolised by the blue blood, the *Hidalguía*. Then there were the students of the minor colleges, the greater number of whom were as

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poor as the proverbial church mouse and were licensed by the Government to sustain themselves by mendicity, at which they were wonderfully expert. Often they went their round with professional beggars, of whom they were worthy pupils, outdoing their masters in impudence and persistence. At other times they sallied forth in bodies, marching to the sound of the guitar, the flute and the tambourine, while the wittiest member of the party, or gracioso, headed them asking alms in improvised verse. At the present day the number of Salamancan students is small indeed, while they are of a very different type to their predecessors, walking the town dressed as 'Señoritos' and no longer to be distinguished by cocked hat, knee breeches and the cloak which was the most typical part of their costume, and was invariably in a state of sorry dilapidation, whence the copla :

la capa de estudiante
parece un jardin de flores
toda llena de remiendos
de diferentes colores.

The learning acquired at the university was of the good old-fashioned order, and up to the middle of the eighteenth century he who dared to state his belief that the sun did not revolve round the earth was considered a vile heretic.

In front of the gorgeous façade of the University Library is an old courtyard surrounded by buildings in which the poorer students lodge—the walls covered with those curious inscriptions in red ochre which so

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often adorn the façades of old Spanish edifices, and in which the words are abbreviated in such a manner that they become quite incomprehensible. In the centre of this courtyard stands the statue of Fray Luis de León, beloved of the Salamancans. Fray Luis, one of the greatest figures in Spanish literature, was a Manchegan by birth, and entered the University of Salamanca in the year 1541, being then fourteen years of age. Shortly afterwards he was received into the Augustinian order, forfeiting considerable property to which he was heir. Continuing his studies at the university, he finally became one of its professors. Though loved and revered by the majority of the students, his liberal ideas soon gained for him the enmity of certain of his brother professors, men of narrow understanding, who vented their spleen by denouncing him to the Inquisition as a heretic. He was seized, and for five years languished in the prison of Valladolid, but at the expiration of this period, nothing having been proved against him, the Holy Office set him at liberty. The story goes that he returned to Salamanca and was received with enthusiasm by the students, who crowded to hear his first lecture, expecting that he would vigorously denounce his enemies. What then was their surprise when Fray Luis, taking up the thread of the lecture which five years before had been interrupted by his arrest, began his discourse with the memorable words 'Decíamos ayer,' 'As we were saying yesterday.' The room in which these words are said to have been spoken still remains just as it was in his day, with its Gothic rostrum and rows of time-worn benches with innumerable

OX WAGGONS ON ROAD TO MADRID



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names and initials carved by hands that centuries ago had crumbled into dust.

Salamanca stands on the banks of the Tormes, which is here crossed by a fine old bridge. Built by Trajan, there still remain fifteen arches of the original construction, the remaining twelve having been built in the time of Philip iv. Often when crossing this bridge we turned to look back at the city, which delighted us by the antiquity of its appearance. Hardly a modern construction could be seen among that great jumbled mass of tawny houses, huddled together round the base of the great cathedral, which dominates everything. Across the bridge came files of laden donkeys, their dainty feet making no sound on the dust-covered roadway, urged on by the raucous 'arré' of their picturesquely clad drivers. From time to time, a heavy 'carro' would come lumbering along drawn by five or six mules, or a cavalcade of peasants pass us riding out to their farms, probably situated miles from anywhere on the desolate sun-parched uplands, but amongst all the traffic on the bridge there was not a jarring note of modernity to remind us that we were in the twentieth century; the peasants' costumes, the animals' trappings and the creaking 'carros,' all were archaic. So complete was the illusion that we should not have been in the least surprised had our eyes lighted on the figure of Lazarillo de Tormes leading along the old blind ruffian, his master. We looked for the 'Stone bull' which Lazarillo tells us stood at the entrance of the bridge, and against which his head was so rudely bumped by the unprincipled old 'ciego.' The stone

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bull, however, is no longer there, but afterwards we found it in the cloisters of the church of San Estéban, whither it had been removed many years before.

The waters of the Tormes are clear and limpid, unlike those of most Spanish rivers which are generally muddy and brown. The banks are beautifully wooded, the dark green of the foliage contrasting wonderfully with the dazzling sand of the wide river-bed, three parts of which is dry during the summer months. Along the water's edge innumerable washerwomen were always at work lightening their labours with gossip and occasional snatches of song rendered in harsh quavering falsettos. Herds of slate-coloured swine lay grunting in the burning sand, tended by sleepy 'gitano' boys. Occasionally a few of these urchins would get together in the inky shade cast by some tall poplar, when one would start to sing coplas, while his companions, squatting round him on their haunches, would mark the time by clapping their hands, listening to his ululations with ludicrous gravity. The song ended, one of them would leap up and begin to dance, accompanying the movement of hands and feet with serpentine contortions of his half-naked brown body.

During the morning the continual clanging of cow-bells attracted one's attention to a certain part of the river-bed where were to be seen great numbers of draught-oxen, who, unharnessed from their carts, awaited with bovine patience the return of their peasant masters, who were about their business in the market-place. Some strolled about leisurely, munching what scanty herbage they could find, or wading into the river

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to drink, while others lay contentedly blinking in the sun, dispersing by petulant movements of head or tail the swarms of voracious flies which surrounded them. Just over the bridge as one entered the town was the 'Botería,' where are made the 'Botas' or wineskins so typical of thirsty Iberia. Round the door, whose lintel was garnished with an array of wineskins, dusty muleteers congregated smoking and chatting with the 'Botero' and his assistants who sat at work within. From the blackened rafters of the shop hung many of those great 'pellejos' made of the entire skin of a pig or goat, which always remind one so forcibly of the poor mad Don, for it was with skins such as these that he waged that fierce nocturnal battle in his chamber at the inn.

No town in Spain suffered more than Salamanca during the French invasion. It was occupied for three years by the Gallic troops, during which time they razed the whole of the south-west portion of the city, destroying thirteen convents and twenty-two of the magnificent old colleges, using the well-seasoned timber thus obtained for the construction of their defensive works, and often compelling the poor inhabitants to labour at the destruction of their own fair city.

On the 16th June 1812, the allies under Lord Wellington appeared within a league of the city, which was immediately evacuated by Marmont and his troops, about eight hundred men being left to defend the forts. The allies were obliged to cross the river at the fords of El Campo and Santa Marta, for the bridge was commanded by the enemies' works. Lord Wellington's

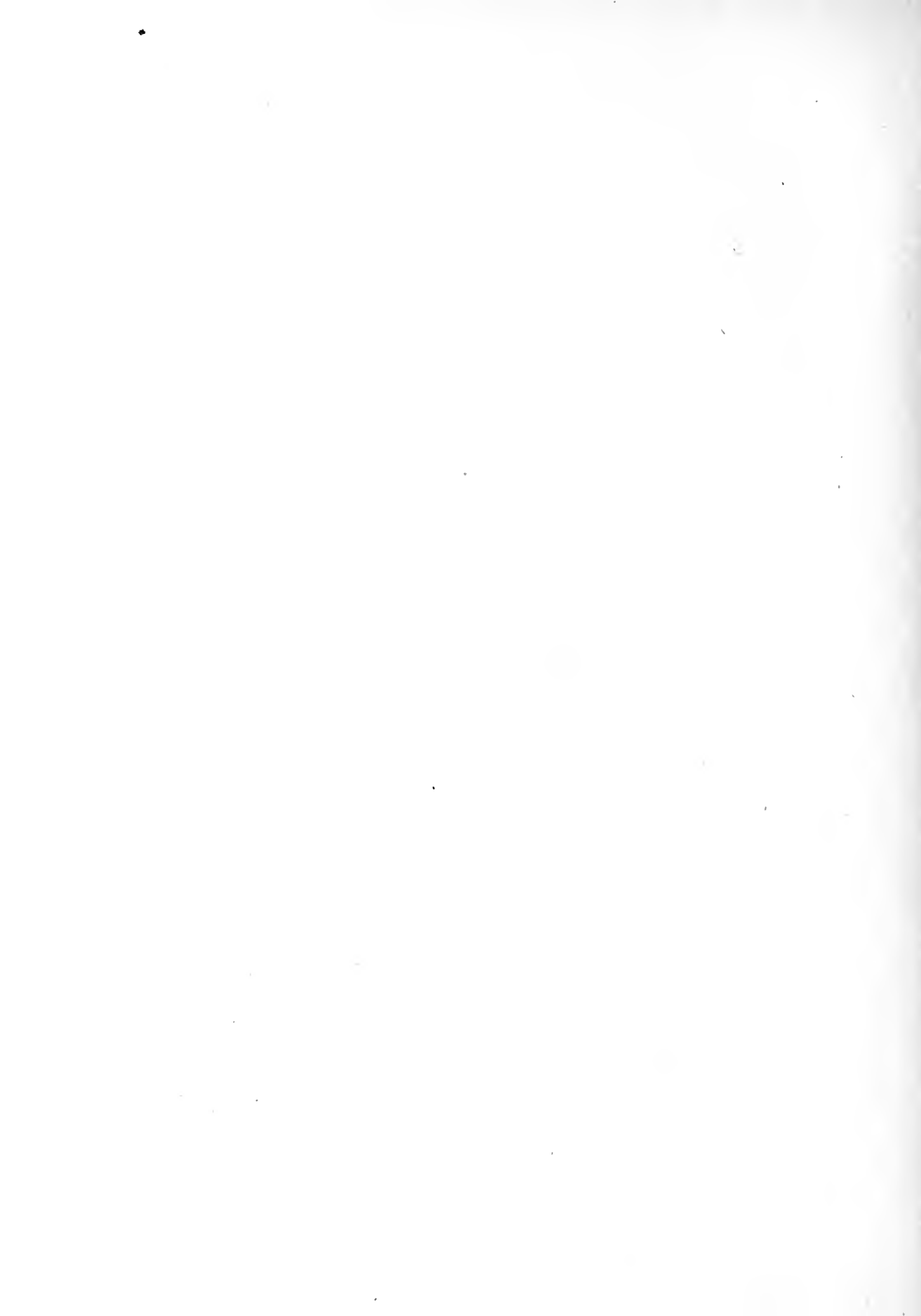
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entry into the city was the signal for general rejoicing, the inhabitants crowding about him and hailing him as their deliverer. On the night of 17th June the attack on the forts was begun, but it was not until the 27th that they finally surrendered. During this time Marmont, with sixteen thousand men, marched forward to relieve them, but his numbers being inadequate for the undertaking, he was compelled to retire. He fell back towards the Douro, his retreat being characterised by rapine and cruelty of the most barbarous description. The crops were destroyed, the villages through which he passed left in flames, all who were found in them being ruthlessly murdered. The country-folk, roused to fury by these atrocities, took terrible vengeance on any straggler from the invading army who fell into their hands. They dealt with them in various ways, perhaps the favourite one being to bind them between two planks, which were then slowly sawn in half. Wellington pursued the retreating foe, but Marmont received considerable reinforcements and the Duke in his turn was forced to retire. After much manœuvring and counter-manœuvring, on the 22nd July the two hostile armies faced each other at Los Arapiles, within six miles of Salamanca. In this action, which lasted seven hours, the French were entirely routed, leaving seven thousand prisoners in the hands of the allies. Thus was the University city finally delivered from the hands of her oppressors.

Salamanca to-day is one of the most interesting and typical of all the cities of Castile ; a place in which one can lead a quiet life wandering through deserted,

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grass-grown streets and shady groves, unvexed by those touts and guides, beggars and insolent urchins who infest the more tourist-ridden cities of the Peninsula. The Salamancans are a quiet, orderly people, who go about their business, taking no heed of the stranger within their gates, and allowing him to go his way unregarded and unmolested.



ZAMORA

EN ROUTE FOR THE BULL-FIGHT

EN ROUTE FOR THE BATTLE



CHAPTER IV

ZAMORA

A CRAWLING train conveyed us from Salamanca to Zamora, whither we journeyed in search of ruins and romance. What then was our disappointment on finding the Zamoreños had disfigured many of their historic buildings with tasteless restorations, or hidden their hoary façades beneath a coat of glossy paint, doubtless with a view of persuading the world at large that their 'well-walled city' was in a more prosperous condition than its noble neighbour, Salamanca. Thus the Don who has spent his last penny on a suit of fashionable clothes will swagger through the streets, the triumph that he enjoys over his worse-clad neighbours making him philosophically regardless of his empty stomach.

Zamora in ancient times was one of the strongest of the fortified places of the Peninsula. Ringed round by seven lines of massive walls, it was a prize much coveted by both Moor and Christian, who, during two centuries, contended stubbornly for its possession. In the year 901 A.D. the town fell into the hands of the Christians, after a bloody battle in which they inflicted great loss on the infidel, of whom 70,000 were either slain or captured.

In 939 the Moors again appeared before its walls,

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losing 40,000 of their number in a fruitless attempt to regain their lost stronghold. But Zamora was not always to remain in Christian hands, for scarce half a century had elapsed before it was conquered by the terrible Almansor, the Victor by God's grace. Once more it became an Arab City, but the power of the Crescent was now on the wane, and within a short time the Cross was again floating over its battlements.

Every one who has read the *Romancero del Cid* will remember how Zamora was bequeathed to Doña Urraca by her dying father Ferdinand I., and how stoutly she defended it against her brother Sancho, who, helped by the Cid, besieged it for some months, and how after Sancho was slain beneath the city walls by the traitor Bellido Dolfos, Diego Ordoñez de Lara denounced the townsfolk for their reception of the cowardly assassin thus :—

‘Fementidos y trayadores
Sois todos los Zamoranos
Porque dentro de essa villa
Acogisteis el malvado de Bellido.’

The postern through which the traitor fled into the city is still pointed out, as are likewise many other sites connected with this romantic history. Zamora boasts a fine Romanesque cathedral which reminded us strongly of the old one at Salamanca, and also an ancient bridge, which up to recent times had three quaint defensive towers upon it, but under the hand of the ‘restorer’ they have disappeared, and the bridge itself has assumed an air of extreme modernity.

In our Fonda we found a Spanish waiter of the real

ZAMORA

old school. This fellow, who was so placid that nothing short of a charging bull would have made him hurry, became greatly attached to H——, whom he was wont to slap affectionately on the back while addressing him as ‘Mosoo.’ When we were at meals he would lean nonchalantly on the back of our friend’s chair smoking a cigarette and discoursing on bull-fighting, on which subject he considered himself an unimpeachable authority. While holding forth on this his favourite theme he was serenely oblivious of the calling and complaints of the other hungry travellers, who were thus obliged to sit fuming before their empty plates, until, having ended his discourse, he proceeded to attend to their wants with a leisurely grace peculiarly his own.

Our stay at Zamora was necessarily a short one, for we had engaged to meet a Spanish friend at the little town of Almazán in the province of Soria, whither we now proceeded. On our way we broke our journey to pay a flying visit to the little village of Simancas, where is a fine old castle in which are gathered the national archives. These precious documents have suffered considerably at the hands of both the French and Spaniards. A great number of them were destroyed during the rising of the Comuneros in 1520, and when the castle was occupied by the French under Kellerman, all those relating to the captivity of François I. were ferreted out and despatched to Paris. Not content with this, the destructive Gauls used them by thousands as fuel, and on leaving set fire to the castle. Luckily, only one wing of the fine old place perished in the flames, and there still remain some thirty million dusty documents

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—enough to glut the appetite of the most persevering Smelfungus. We maliciously reminded H—— of the vandalism of his countrymen, but he retaliated by speaking of certain events, none too creditable to our own soldiery, which had occurred in the castle of Benavente and after the taking of San Sebastian.

ALMAZAN

CHAPTER V

ALMAZÁN

THE journey to Almazán was a most tedious one, and when we at last arrived it was in the small hours of the morning. Owing to some mistake, our friend Don L—— was not at the station. The night was bitterly cold, for Almazán lies high even for a Castilian town. Seated on our luggage on the draughty platform of the diminutive station, we awaited our friend's arrival, and were not sorry when half an hour later he made his appearance. We immediately set out for the town, which is at some distance from the station, and where we arrived just as day began to break. The streets were deserted save for a few stray dogs and the 'Serenos' or night-watchman, who, muffled to the eyes in his striped 'manta' and carrying a lighted lantern and an iron-shod stick, was doing his round, crying the hour and the state of the weather, 'Ave Maria purísima! Las cinco . . . o . . . y sereno . . . o . . . oy.' This particular fellow between rounds would doze on the doorstep of our Fonda until awakened by the hourly clanging of the church clock, when he would leap to his feet, and, standing immediately beneath our bedroom window, would bawl so lustily that we were invariably awakened however profound our slumber. He would then start off through an adjoining street, his cry, repeated

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at intervals, gradually becoming fainter in the distance and then swelling in volume as he once more approached.

Our Fonda left much to be desired, though this, of course, is to be expected when one gets off the beaten track in Spain. The rooms which we occupied were unspeakably filthy and verminous, while poor H—— was at first obliged to share his with four other guests—a common enough occurrence in the country inns of Spain. Insisting on having a room of his own, he was thrust into a sort of cupboard without a window and barely large enough to hold the small bed which was its sole article of furniture. The door of this apartment opened directly on to the dining-room, so that the unlucky occupant was obliged to keep it perpetually shut, and was thus deprived of all ventilation. The food, however, though roughly served, was extremely good of its kind. At most meals the ‘cocido’ was served. This consists of meat stewed with those Garbanzos or chick-peas which Théophile Gautier in his *Voyage en Espagne* describes as rattling in his stomach like small shot in a tambourine. The ‘cocido’ forms the staple food of the Castilian peasant, and of it he makes three courses, eating first the broth, next the garbanzos, and finally the meat.

Almazán is a picturesque little town on the banks of the Duero, which is here crossed by an old bridge of thirteen arches. It has a fine market-square, one corner of which is occupied by an old seigniorial mansion, built of a warm yellow stone and adorned with elaborate escutcheons, which I believe belongs to the Conde de Altamira. There are also some interesting old churches, one of which, San Miguel, has a handsome reredos.

THE ALCÁNTARA, TOLEDO



ALMAZÁN

Another one, whose name I forget, and whose interior was more remarkable for its quaintness than beauty, was being re-decorated by an Italian who was staying at the Fonda, and who often amused us by relating his experiences in many out-of-the-way places of the Peninsula.

The costume of the people is similar to that of the Segovians but rather more gay, for instead of their stockings being dark they are white or pale blue, while the handkerchiefs with which they bind their brows are of the most brilliant colours. We also remarked a number of them wearing costumes of brown or green velvet, while many encircle their loins with a woollen 'faja' or sash, of the same pale blue as their stockings. In this town we were most hospitably received by a good priest, a near relation of our friend Don L——. He was a typical specimen of the Spanish country 'cura,' small, active and lean, with face tanned to an African hue by continual exposure to sun and wind. He was immensely popular among his parishioners, who were loud in their praises of his good deeds and unselfishness, and formed a striking contrast to those flabby, fat-paunched clerics that one meets in the cathedral cities. We were often his guests at supper in the quaint old house where he lived with his aunt, a kindly old lady of sixty or thereabouts. The life of these good people was frugal in the extreme, but as wine in that part of the world is nearly as cheap as water, the little 'cura' did not see fit to deny himself that luxury, and during a meal thought nothing of emptying a 'porrón' (which must have held at least two litres). The porrón, a very

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popular drinking vessel among the peasantry of Castile and Aragón, is a broad-bottomed glass bottle furnished with a spout. It is held at arms' length, and the wine allowed to fall in a stream down the drinker's throat.

The 'cura' was far from being sanctimonious ; he could tell a good story and did not hesitate to emphasise his conversation with sonorous Castilian oaths, which, however, in no way lessened his dignity in the eyes of his parishioners. His house was one of those typical old Spanish dwellings, with red-tiled floors, low-pitched oak-beamed rooms and massive panelled doors. The small windows were heavily barred and shuttered but completely innocent of glass. The white-washed walls of the rooms were hung with a few common prints of a religious nature, while the furniture was of the simplest and rudest description, the only article of luxury being the 'cura's' time-worn leather arm-chair. In the entrance passage hung saddle-bags, mule trappings and a wine-skin, suggesting that the good priest sometimes took long journeys over the dusty high roads of Soria.

Having learnt that not far from Almazán stood the ruins of an old Moorish castle, we one day set out in quest of them. We could only obtain three mounts for this expedition, a jaded donkey, a forlorn Rocinante and a tall and angular mule, who was obliged to do double duty, for there were four of us. We at first followed a mule track over a tawny, desolate waste, whose only vegetation was a profuse growth of thistles. After some hours' going we arrived at a line of low hills, and, continuing our way among these, soon came in sight of an abrupt rocky eminence on whose summit we discerned

ALMAZÁN

the ruins of which we were in quest. Another hour's ride brought us to its base, where we found a hamlet of some half dozen mud-built hovels. The only living creature that we could discover, beyond a few ill-looking curs that growled ominously at our approach, was a little old woman, who sat knitting at the door of one of these tumbledown cots. We hailed her and chatted awhile, satisfying her frankly expressed curiosity as to who we were and what we did. Her delight and surprise was unbounded on discovering that three of us were foreigners, for it appeared that she had never seen one before. Struck by her mummy-like aspect we inquired her age, whereupon she replied 'Cinco duros y dos reales!' Puzzled by this bizarre reply, we sought enlightenment of Don L——, who explained that many old people in that part of the world reckon their age like money, each year being represented by a real ($2\frac{1}{2}$ d.); the old lady was therefore 102 years of age. We were not surprised at this information, for we had already on several occasions discovered centenarians in out-of-the-way villages in the Peninsula. We scrambled up to the castle, which turned out to be of little interest, and certainly bore no signs of Moorish workmanship.

The extensive view from this eminence was wild and desolate in the extreme, the country being practically treeless for miles around. At some distance were some patches of cultivated ground, in which we could distinguish the figures of some men and women at work, doubtless the inhabitants of the hamlet which lay at our feet; in the other direction, far out on the sandy waste, our eyes were attracted to a black object which must

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have been the carcass of some animal, for around it hovered a flock of enormous vultures. Some years before we had seen one of these great birds caught in a novel manner in a little village of Estremadura. A strong hook attached to a long cord was baited with a piece of horse flesh ; this was thrown out towards the carcass of a sheep around which a number of these voracious birds were gathered. It was not long before one of them took the bait, and the hook becoming embedded in his throat, he was hauled in and despatched with sticks and stones, though not without difficulty, for he fought furiously, attacking his enemies with beak, wing and claw. As far as we could judge, this bird must have measured the best part of seven feet from tip to tip of its expanded wings. This angling for birds is much indulged in by Spaniards, and Washington Irving tells us that in his day a number of idlers were always to be seen fishing for swallows from the battlements of the Alhambra. It was late in the afternoon when we descended from the old castle and set off on our return journey. The weather by this time had become gloomy and threatening, and we had not accomplished half the journey when a terrific thunderstorm burst over us. So heavy was the downpour that in spite of coats and mantas we were soon soaked to the skin, while, the animals becoming terrified, we had the greatest difficulty in urging them forward. Thus it was that night overtook us while yet some miles from our destination, and now our progress became slower than ever, for we had nothing but the occasional flashes of lightning to illuminate our way. Soon, however, matters became

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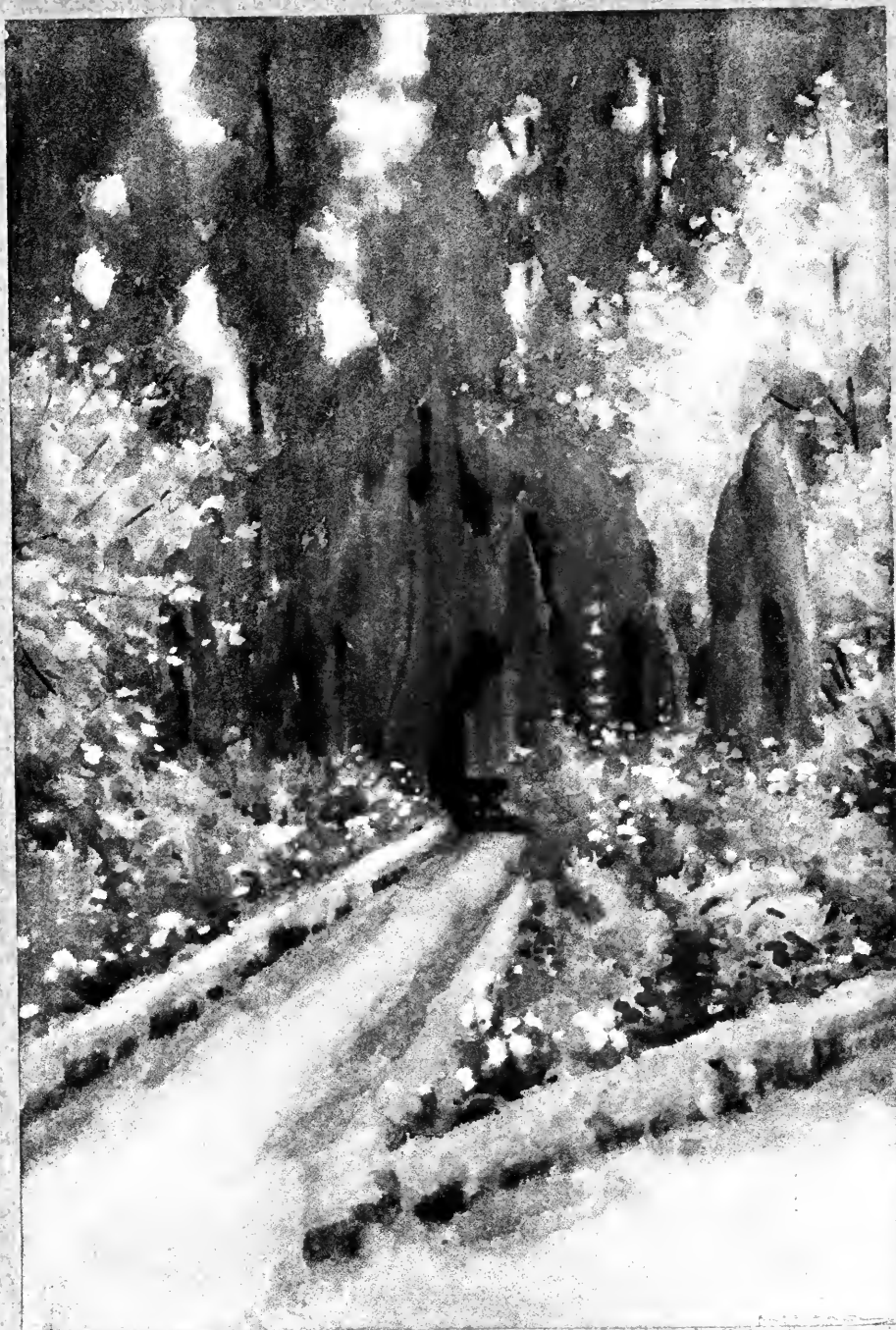
worse, for the storm, which had gradually been abating, ceased altogether, leaving us in pitchy blackness through which we literally had to grope our way. It was while proceeding thus that we missed H—— who was the hindmost of the party. For some while we hallooed in vain, and were becoming seriously alarmed, when to our relief a tiny flare appeared far away to the left of the track. Lighting a piece of paper we showed an answering flare, and continued to do this at intervals until H—— appeared, swearing horribly as he dragged along his unwilling donkey. It seemed that the donkey was at the root of the trouble, for he had jibbed, causing his rider to dismount and struggle with him ; having at length subdued his unruly steed, H—— prepared to remount, but found to his dismay that in the tussle he had lost the track. All his efforts to regain it proving fruitless, he had resorted to the expedient of showing a flare, and it was well that he did so, for he was then proceeding entirely in the wrong direction, and might thus have spent the night wandering in the wilderness. The most unpleasant part of his adventure was that he had strayed into a prodigious clump of thistles, and being only shod with hempen sandals, his feet and ankles had suffered severely. Poor H—— having consoled himself with a long pull at the wineskin, which we had fortunately brought with us, we once more started off, and soon afterwards reached our destination.

It was not without regret that some days after we took leave of the little town of Almazán and our kind friend the ‘cura,’ and set out for Madrid in company with Don L——.

M A D R I D

THE GARDENS OF ARANJUEZ

THE GARDEN, 1871



CHAPTER VI

MADRID

MADRID had in no way changed. The Gran Via, that new broad street, which is to traverse half the city, seemed to be as far as ever from completion, and presented a dismal picture of hoardings and demolished houses. The same loquacious crowd filled the Alcalá and the Puerta del Sol, while heavy ox-waggon and creaking mule carts still lumbered through the streets side by side with the luxurious automobiles of the rich. The Calle de Sevilla was still thronged with pig-tailed toreros and hangers-on of the bull-ring, who, with rakishly cocked Cordobés sombreros and refulgent brown boots, paraded the pavements puffing at their cigars and cigarettes, or gathered into groups discussing women and bulls—their two eternal topics of conversation. The climate of Madrid has been much abused, and the Madrileños themselves are for ever repeating the hackneyed rhyme, ‘El aire de Madrid es tan sutil que mata á un hombre y no apaga á un candil.’

‘The air of Madrid is so subtle that it will kill a man without extinguishing a candle.’ But I should think that the prevalence of chest diseases in Madrid is due, not so much to the insalubrity of its climate as to the

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unhealthy lives led by a great number of its citizens, who habitually turn night into day, pursuing their nocturnal diversions with an untiring energy strikingly at variance with the drowsiness that they display during business hours.

Although a certain old Spanish chronicler states that Madrid was founded immediately after the deluge we do not hear of it in authentic history before the year 933 A.D. when Ramiro II. captured it from the Moors. It afterwards passed through the vicissitudes of most Spanish towns at that period, falling now into Christian and now into Moorish hands, until 1197, when the Infidels under Aben-Yusuf were finally repulsed.

Up to the reign of that despicable monarch Henry IV., Madrid must have been quite an unimportant little place, though often resorted to by royalty, who made use of its old Alcázar as a sort of hunting-box, for in those days the surrounding hills, now so remarkable for their nakedness, were clothed with thick forest in which the bear and wild boar roamed. The Emperor Charles V. became greatly attached to Madrid, finding its climate good for the gout. He rebuilt the old Alcázar, transforming it into a large three-storied building flanked by towers which were capped by Flemish spires. These Ford describes as resembling extinguishers, adding 'that they are no bad types for a town where climate and policy alike conspire to put out life and mind.' Philip II. transferred the seat of government from Toledo to Madrid in the year 1561, and thenceforward its comparative prosperity was assured. During his reign the old walls were thrown down to allow of the expansion

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of the city, while many of the principal thoroughfares date from this period.

Francis Willughby gives the following description of the capital as it appeared in the seventeenth century. 'Madrid is very populous, well built with good brick houses, many having glass windows, which is worth the noting, because you shall scarce see any in all Spain besides. The streets are very foul and nasty. There is one very fair Piazza or market-place, encompassed round with tall and uniform houses, having five rows of balconies one above another, and underneath porticos or cloysters quite round. The chief things to be seen in Madrid are 1. The Prison, 2. The Piazza just now mentioned, 3. The King's Chappel, 4. Palaces of several noblemen, as that of the Duke of Alva, that of the Duke of Medina de las Torres, etc., 5. The King's palace where there is the King's Cavallerisca and the Queen's Cavallerisca, 6. A great Piazza before the Palace, where are abundance of coaches always attending.'

In the year 1734 the palace mentioned by Willughby, which was the one constructed by Charles v., was burnt to the ground, and Philip v. commissioned one Felipe Juvara to prepare plans for its rebuilding. These plans were, however, rejected, for the proposed palace would have been far too costly, besides requiring a site much larger than that occupied by its predecessor. Juvara's pupil Saccheti was responsible for the present building, which is certainly the most striking feature of Madrid and one of the finest royal palaces in the world.

When Charles III., one of Spain's wisest monarchs,

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came to the throne in 1759, he was disgusted at the filthy condition in which he found his capital. There was no attempt at any sort of drainage, all the refuse being cast into the streets, which were thus rendered almost impassable and foul beyond belief. Fully half of the squalid population lived by sharpening and mendicity, whilst the danger of assassination was so great that few after nightfall dared to traverse its noisome streets, which were unlit save for the feeble glimmer of an occasional oil lamp, hung there not for the public convenience, but for the illumination of some tawdry image in its shrine. The lower orders walked the streets muffled to the eyes in the folds of their ample cloaks, while the brims of their enormous sombreros were allowed to drop in such a way as to preclude the possibility of identification. This made the apprehension of criminals extremely difficult, and Charles at once determined to remedy the evil. An order was issued that all hats were to be worn cocked, and that the use of long cloaks was prohibited; nor was this all, for it was decreed that Madrid should be cleansed, drained and lighted. This was too much for the haughty citizens of La Corte and they revolted. The streets, which had hitherto run with the foulest garbage, now ran with blood, and after two days of anarchy the king was obliged to give way—at least in part—to the demands of the multitude. Charles never forgave the Madrileños for this revolt, and had he not been dissuaded by his minister Aranda, would certainly have removed the seat of government to Sevilla. In spite of all opposition, however, the capital was purged of a great part of its criminal population and thoroughly

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cleansed. This new wholesomeness, however, was far from being popular, and Swinburne, writing in 1776, says 'some of the natives regret the old stinks and nastiness, as they pretend that the air of Madrid is so subtle as to require a proper mixture of a grosser effluvium to prevent its pernicious effects upon the constitution !' The order respecting cloaks and slouch hats, though at first stoutly resisted, was at length enforced by the following stratagem. The king surmising that no citizen would care to be mistaken for the common hangman, publicly commanded that worthy to wear a sombrero with a drooping brim as a badge of his infamous calling. The effect was instantaneous, and thenceforth none but cocked hats were to be seen in the streets of Madrid.

During Charles's reign many fine buildings were erected in Madrid, and the Madrileños have to thank him for the laying out of their favourite promenades, the Recoletos and the Salón del Prado. These magnificent avenues were made in a shallow vale which separated the palace and gardens of the Retiro from the town, and which up to his time was infamous as the resort of footpads and plotters. At the corner of the Paseo de Recoletos and the Calle de Alcalá stands a large building which is now the Ministry of War, but was once the residence of Manuel Godoy, the upstart minister of Charles IV., who, beguiled by the wily Bonaparte, opened wide the door to the inpouring hordes of France. Godoy was swept away, but the French remained, and soon Madrid was in the iron grip of the invader. On the 2nd May 1808 the people of the

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capital rose against their Gallic oppressors. With desperate heroism this comparatively unarmed mob hurled itself upon the bayonets of the veteran troops of the Empire. The result was inevitable, and the insurrection was repressed with ferocious cruelty ; but Napoleon little knew the stubborn race with which he had to deal. Madrid had set an example to the rest of Spain and the world at large. The people rose throughout the Peninsula, and at length, with help from England, the invader was driven back across the Pyrenees. Thus was struck the first of that series of tremendous blows which ultimately felled the Corsican Colossus.

The inhabitants of Madrid at the present day strike one as being exceptionally amiable and lighthearted. The lower classes rarely squabble in the streets as do the French, though this probably is due quite as much to laziness as to good humour, their energies being reserved for bawling at the bullfight, or for their nightly sacrifices at the shrine of Terpsichore. It is on Sunday that the little capital presents the gayest spectacle. The hubbub in the street begins at quite an early hour, and one is awakened by the cries of the newsvendors, the sellers of lottery tickets, and of leaflets telling of the lives and exploits of toreros who are to perform that afternoon.

At 9 A.M. the office for the sale of tickets for the Plaza de Toros opens its doors, and is immediately besieged by an eager but orderly crowd. Despite the fact that this bureau has been open during the whole of the previous day there is no lack of purchasers, and the

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swarthy sporting-looking individuals who dispense the tickets are kept busily employed.

The Calle de Alcalá presents a lively scene, for its ample pavements are thronged ; men are largely in the majority, for few 'Señoras' make their appearance thus early in the day. Inside and out the cafés are full of smartly dressed Dons, talking and smoking as only Spaniards can, while among them the shoeblacks, who are such typical figures in the streets of Madrid, find ample employment.

Quite early in the afternoon the stream of intending spectators begins to flow towards the Plaza de Toros. The merriest are those who go on foot, artisans and their wives, small tradespeople and peasants from the neighbouring villages ; the men in their Sunday suits of black velvet, wineskin slung over shoulder, pockets bulging with provisions, the deep sonorous tones of their voices mingling with the clicking fans and strident chatter of the black-haired, black-shawled women. Along the roadway rumbles and rattles a continuous procession of vehicles of every description, hackney coaches driven by shouting, whip-cracking Jehus, in which loll the good 'aficionados' luxuriously puffing at their post-prandial cigars, throbbing automobiles with their fashionable freights, electric tramcars and lumbering char-a-bancs drawn by teams of six or eight mules, from whose gay caparisons hang clusters of merrily jingling bells. From time to time one's eye is attracted by the glittering clothes of a Picador, who with his satellite, the scarlet-clad 'mono sabio,' mounted behind him, goes jogging along towards the bull-ring, his

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emaciated, broken-kneed Rocinante staggering under the double burden.

The scene outside the Plaza de Toros is of the most animated description; the great building, lit by the afternoon sun, glows ruddily through a cloud of dust rising from under the wheels of innumerable vehicles. As each one arrives its occupants are clamorously importuned by sellers of programmes, sweetmeats, gaudy fans and paper cushions. With a prodigious clatter of hoofs and arms a posse of the civil guard arrives, and is drawn up near the principal entrance. And now the acclamations of the multitude announce the arrival of the brakes containing the gorgeously attired matadors and their cuadrillas. As they get out the crowd press about them and excited 'aficionados' push and jostle their way to the front, anxious to be recognised by the heroes of the hour, who, entering the Plaza, make their way through gloomy corridors to the little whitewashed chapel, there to prepare themselves spiritually for the coming fray. Inside, a swaying, sweltering multitude of more than 13,000 excited spectators surrounds the arena. To the strains of a military band, scarcely audible above the deafening roar of voices, the resplendent gladiators march out. They cross the Plaza and salute the President. Then changing their gorgeously embroidered silken cloaks for cotton ones, which bear the stains of previous bloody combats, they await the coming onslaught. The picadors take their positions, the Alguazil receives the key of the 'Chiquero,' and in another moment the first bull is released and the carnage begins. The bullfight over, the crowd surges

A SHEPHERD OF LA MANCHA



MADRID

out of the Plaza and down the Calle de Alcalá flows the returning tide of vehicles and pedestrians.

At this hour all Madrid turns out, and up to eight or nine o'clock the streets are packed, and the cafés do a roaring trade. Then there is a lull, but later on the citizens again come forth, some to promenade in the Recoletos, some to patronise the theatre; while the sporting element congregate in the Calle de Sevilla, where illuminated placards announce the 'results' of the provincial corridas.

During our stay in Madrid we paid a visit to the Escorial, that grim, granite pile erected by the Hapsburg bigot on the Guadarrama slopes. The village of the Escorial, on account of its lofty situation, has become a favourite summer resort of the Madrileños, and the walks which surround the monastery, where once the feet of pious monks were wont to tread, are now filled with fashionable promenaders, while the massive walls resound with the happy laughter of children at play.

Of the wonders of this mighty monastery too much has already been written to justify a further description in these pages; suffice it to say, that few can pace, without a feeling akin to awe, its gloomy halls and corridors in which the phantom of the monkish monarch ever seems to roam, or view without respect and admiration a work conceived upon so vast a plan. Its treasures of art well merit all the praise that has been so lavishly bestowed upon them, and as to its situation, which has so often been abused, it seemed to us on that cloudless summer day to be little short of ideal, though doubtless in winter it leaves much to desired.

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The treasures of the Sacristy were shown us by a young monk of the order of St. Augustine, who astonished us by his keen appreciation and just criticism of the pictures, which, he said, he never wearied of studying. On learning that we were artists he confessed to being an amateur limner, and blushing produced some of his work for our inspection.

One of the most interesting sights of the Escorial are the apartments of Philip II., which are furnished with a simplicity worthy of a monarch of such monastical tendencies ; they are situated at the east end of the great church, just to the right of the Capilla Mayor, with which they are connected by two small chambers of black marble, into one of which the unhappy Philip was carried, *in extremis*, in order that his dying gaze might rest upon the high altar. Hard by is the Relicario, in which are guarded Philip's unique and priceless collection of saintly remains. In making this grisly congeries poor Philip probably passed the happiest moments of his life ; nothing was too big or too small for his net, and at the time of his death he had amassed, by fair means or foul, no less than 7421 authenticated specimens, which, at enormous cost, he had encased in precious metals, and deposited in shrines of exquisite workmanship. When the Gallic invaders visited the Escorial, they rummaged the relics and departed with a rich hoard of bullion and precious stones, leaving the floor strewn with the bones, teeth, and toe-nails of departed saints. The pious monks gathered them together with proper reverence, but rumour hath it that the skeleton members had lost

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their labels and have never yet been satisfactorily sorted.

We, of course, descended by the jasper staircase to that chilly marble vault, where, each in his sable sarcophagus, sleep the departed monarchs of Castile, and also visited the 'Podridero' or putrefying place of the Princes, which is not so gruesome a place as its name would seem to indicate, but nothing more than a series of well-lit rooms, in which are crowded together the innumerable white marble tombs of the Infantes. In one chamber a number of the royal children are sepulchred together in a circular structure resembling nothing so much as a gigantic wedding cake.

THE BULL-FIGHT

CHAPTER VII

THE BULL-FIGHT

AS the Bull-fight is such an important feature of Spanish life, I think that a short description of the sport may be of interest, especially as, far from being on the decline, as is generally believed, it appears to be growing in popularity, if we can take as proof the number of new bull-rings which have been erected during the last few years, and the substantial increase in the annual number of bull-fights. Of the origin of the sport little is known, though it was undoubtedly popular among Christians and Moors alike. We do not, however, hear of a bull-fight in an enclosed space until the end of the eleventh century, when the old chroniclers say one was celebrated in Toledo on the occasion of a marriage festival. Up to the middle of the eighteenth century the sport was exceedingly popular among the nobility, who whilst encountering the bulls were able to display their horsemanship and courage. In the seventeenth century it is thus described by Francis Willughby: ‘The most noble sport in Spain is the *Jeu de Taureau*, or Bull-fighting, practised at Valentia, Madrid, etc. At Madrid three times in the year, where in the market-place a brave Don on horseback, and a great many Pages on foot, fight with a wild bull. When one bull is killed or much wounded

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they turn in another. Seldom but some of the Pages are killed. And with these cruel and bloody spectacles the people are much delighted, as were the Romans of old in the time of Heathenism.'

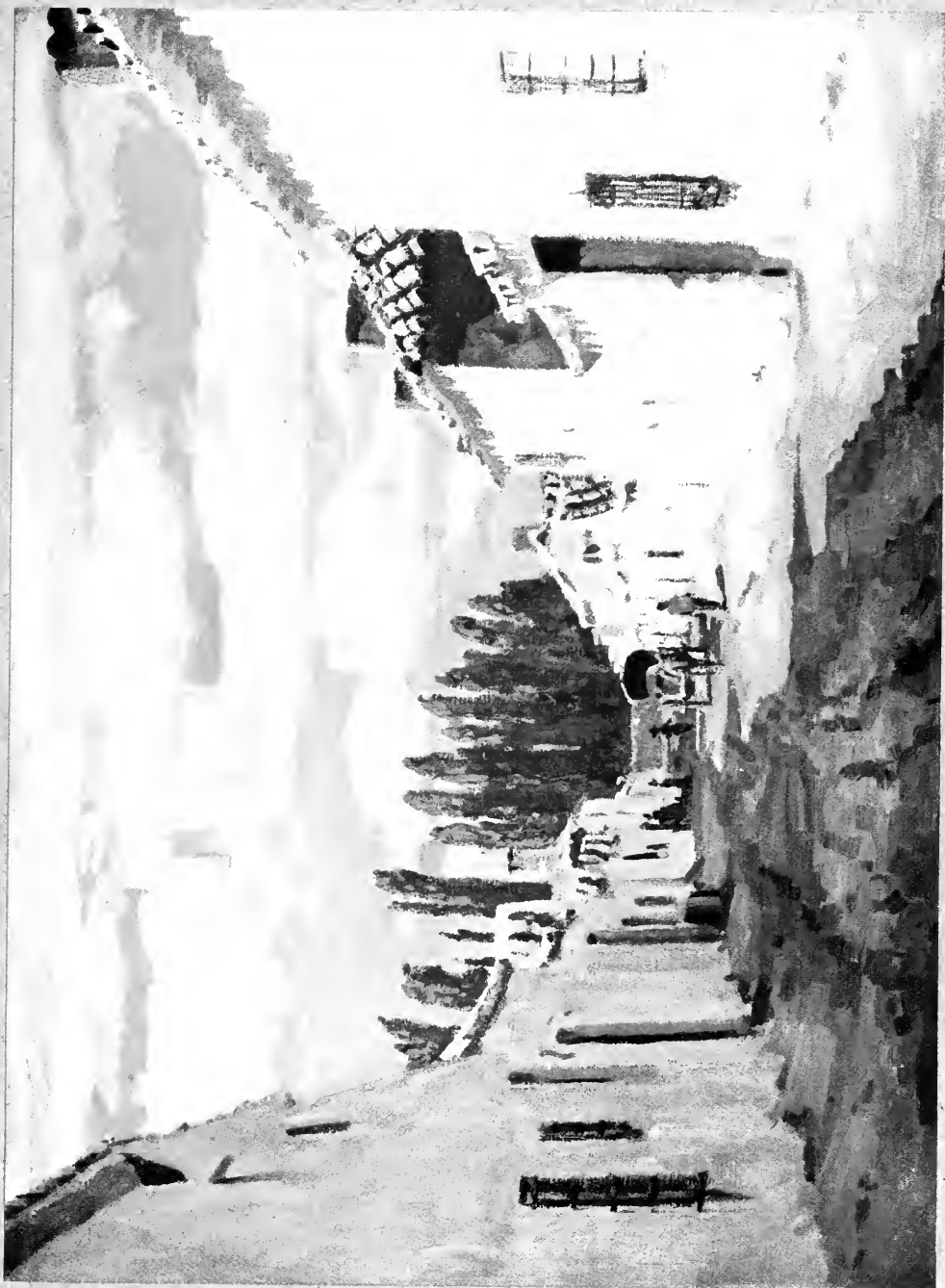
Philip v. and his attendant courtiers, accustomed to the refinements of Versailles, were shocked at this rude and barbarous spectacle, and henceforth bull-fighting as a pastime for the nobility was doomed. It now became the sport of the people, and as such suffered a complete revolution. Hitherto the bull had been killed by a nobleman on horseback armed with a lance. Now there came forward one, Francisco Romero, a man of the people, who killed bulls on foot, armed with a sword.

Francisco Romero, who was a native of Ronda in Andalucia, was born somewhere about the year 1700, and obtained his first tauromachic experience while serving as page to a bull-fighting nobleman. Seeing that the old method of killing bulls left much to be desired, he introduced a new one, which is the following: armed with a sword, and carrying a small red cloak called 'Muleta,' he planted himself before the bull, and, stamping his foot, induced the animal to charge. Then, by flaunting the 'Muleta,' he deceived the animal, making it pass to one side of him, and dispatching it with a sword-thrust as it swept by him. This method, however, had one great defect, for many animals refuse to charge, preferring to fight on the defensive. In this case the matador was powerless to accomplish his end, and was obliged to retire, leaving the bull to be ham-strung or dragged down by dogs ;

ARGAMASILLA DE ALBA—LA MANCHA

1000

...I do hope
...over the world
...the ...



THE BULL-FIGHT

and this led to the introduction of a new method which will shortly be described.

Contemporary with Francisco Romero lived Manuel Bellón, generally called 'El Africano,' one of the most interesting and romantic figures in tauromachic history. The date and place of his birth is uncertain, but it is supposed that he was born in Sevilla, where he was living in the year 1730, when he became the hero of one of those sanguinary incidents all too common, even at the present day, in the capital of Andalusia. At that time, although but a youth, he had already gained a reputation as a bull-fighter of exceptional courage and ability, and great things were expected of him in the future. Bellón was desperately in love with a fair Sevillana, who, however, proved unfaithful, deserting him for another. In a frenzy of jealousy the injured lover sought his rival. A duel with knives ensued, in which Bellón was victorious, mortally wounding his antagonist. Escaping from the clutches of the law, he fled to Africa, where during twelve years he lived a life of hardship and privation, gaining a livelihood now as horse-breaker, now as merchant, and now as camel-driver, crossing the burning sands to Timbuctoo, descending the River Niger, hunting wild beasts, and dwelling among savage tribes. At the expiration of this period he returned to Sevilla a temerarious and travel-worn adventurer, and took up his old profession of bull-fighting, in which he showed such skill and contempt for danger that Francisco Romero said of him that even the bulls stopped astonished at such bravery and tranquillity. In every branch of the art

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he won applause, but never more so than when, taking sword in hand and winding his cloak about his left arm, after the manner of his countrymen when they prepare for a duel with knives, he would approach within a few paces of the bull, and then darting forward with the rapidity of lightning would plunge his sword to the hilt down through the shoulder of the animal, piercing its heart and killing it instantly. This is the method of killing which is now almost invariably employed—though the matador uses the ‘muleta’ invented by Francisco Romero, instead of winding a cloak about his left arm—and is known as the ‘Suerte de Volapié.’ ‘El Africano’ suddenly disappeared when at the height of his fame, and to this day nobody knows how or when he died. In person we learn that he was tall, handsome, and very swarthy, and in disposition reserved and melancholy. The next great matador was Juan Romero, son of Francisco, who, after a long and successful career, died in his native Ronda over a hundred years of age. He did much to improve the art, introducing that scientific, tranquil manner of bull-fighting which afterwards became known as the ‘Escuela Rondeña,’ or school of Ronda. José Cándido and Joaquín Rodríguez, better known as ‘Costillares,’ were both famous matadors of the eighteenth century. The former was killed in the Plaza of El Puerto de Santa Maria in the year 1771, while the latter is celebrated for having brought to perfection the ‘Volapié’ introduced by ‘El Africano.’

And now we come to Pedro Romero, the greatest bull-fighter that Spain has ever produced. In his time

THE BULL-FIGHT

he fought and killed 5600 bulls without receiving a single wound—a stupendous record. Retiring while still young, he afterwards became manager of the famous tauromachic school at Sevilla. Like the rest of the Romeros he was long-lived, for he died at the age of eighty-five, boasting that in all his life he had never had an enemy. This, however, was not strictly true, for his rival Pepe-Hillo had loathed him with all the venom of which his jealous nature was capable. Pepe-Hillo, whose real name was José Delgado y Guerra, was born in a suburb of Sevilla in 1754, the same year in which Pedro Romero saw the light. Endowed with great courage and all the other qualities which make a first-class bull-fighter, his life was embittered by the jealousy and malignity with which he regarded every other torero who came into competition with him. Of all his rivals Pedro Romero was the one who caused him the most heart-burning, for Romero had attained to heights in the art which Hillo knew he could never hope to emulate.

When under the influence of this sinister passion it is recorded that he was terrible to look on, as with blazing eyes and foaming mouth he hurled himself on the very horns of the bull, endeavouring to do by desperate and suicidal courage that which his rival had accomplished by consummate art. It was thus, whilst endeavouring to wrest the laurels from the brow of his rival, that he met his death in the Plaza of Madrid, the 11th May 1801.

Among the well-known toreros of this period may be mentioned Curro Guillén, who was killed in the

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year 1820. The unfortunate Guillén had a favourite pupil, Juan León, whose name is remembered for the heroic but futile attempt which he made on this occasion to save his friend and master. León, although an excellent bull-fighter, never enjoyed much popularity owing to his pronounced political opinions.

Four years after the death of Hillo, in the town of Chiclana in the province of Cadiz, was born Francisco Montes, destined to become, after Pedro Romero, the greatest figure in the history of the Bull-ring. While still at an early age misfortune overtook his family, who had originally been in comfortable circumstances. The youthful Montes was obliged to earn his bread by working as a bricklayer. This humble calling, however, did not coincide with his ambitions ; he abandoned it and sought wealth and fame in the Bull-ring. His success was immediate, and in a few years he was recognised as a past master of the art. After a brilliant career he died, at the age of forty-six, in his native town, of fever following a wound which he had received in the Plaza of Madrid some months before.

During the following decade the three most prominent bull-fighters were Cayetano Sanz, Cúchares and Chiclanero. The two latter, once bosom friends, were rendered irreconcilable enemies by professional jealousy, many amusing tales being told of their bitter rivalry. On one occasion, neither wishing to cede to the other the honour of killing the first bull, they both attacked it simultaneously, armed with sword and muleta, thus breaking every rule of tauromachic etiquette and scandalising the public.

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Between the years 1860 and 1890 the more prominent names in the history of the bull-fight are those of Frascuelo and Lagartijo. They both won the heart of the public, the former by his valour and temerity, the latter by the supreme knowledge that he displayed in every branch of the art. They were succeeded by Rafael Guerra, undoubtedly the greatest bull-fighter of modern times, who, after a brilliant career, retired at the early age of thirty-seven, being driven to this measure by the hostile attitude which the public never failed to display towards him, whenever he appeared in the Bull-ring.

A man of strong character, he took his profession seriously, living cleanly, and insisting that the members of his cuadrilla did the like. He never allowed himself to be exploited, and would have no truck with the dissolute parasites who invariably swarm about the popular torero. This was undoubtedly the main cause of his unpopularity, though it was probably increased by unfortunate differences which arose between him and certain other well-known bull-fighters. During his career Guerra amassed a large fortune, and now lives in Cordoba, his native town.

Prominent among the toreros of this epoch were Luis Mazzantini and Espartero ; the former retired some nine years ago and lives in Madrid, of whose municipal council he was for some time a prominent member, while the latter died in harness, being killed in the Bull-ring of Madrid on the 27th May 1894.

Espartero was adored by the public for the fierce courage which he invariably displayed when confront-

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ing his four-footed antagonists. During the nine years in which he exercised the profession of matador, he was, as the Spaniards say, much chastised by the bulls (*muy castigado por los toros*), receiving innumerable wounds, thirteen of which were of an exceedingly grave nature.

The Bull-ring has just lost two of its most shining lights in the persons of 'Bombita' and 'Machaquito,' who retired at the end of last season. 'Bombita,' one of three brothers, all well-known matadors, was an exponent of the florid Sevillian school of bull-fighting, while 'Machaquito' fought in the dignified manner prescribed by the classical school of Ronda, or, as it is now called, of Cordoba.

Among the matadors who are still on the active list, the names of 'Gallo,' 'Gallito,' and Antonio Fuentes figure prominently, and there is also a young matador named Juan Belmonte, of whom great things are expected. Though none save Spaniards, or those of Spanish blood, have ever become famous in the Bull-ring, yet there are several instances of foreigners who have attained the rank of matador. Within recent times the names of two Frenchmen figure on this list, François Robert and Felix Robert, while at the present day a Chinaman named Hong is following the perilous calling in Mexico.

Old Ireland, too, has had its representative in the person of John O'Hara, who, originally a soldier in garrison at Gibraltar, became enamoured of the sport, and finally took it up as a profession. During two years he fought in various Spanish Bull-rings as a

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matador of 'Novillos' or young bulls, but without achieving any great success.

And now, having considered the origin and history of the sport, let us turn our attention to the bulls.

The breeding of these animals is effected in large cattle farms (*ganaderías*), a number of which belong to members of the nobility. The *ganaderías* are dotted all over Spain from Navarre to Andalucía, and are often situated far from human habitation, amid great 'dehesas' or pasture grounds, over which the savage herds roam at will, guarded by 'vaqueros,' who, having little opportunity of mixing with their fellow-men, are frequently as brutish as the beasts of whom they are condemned to be the constant companions. There are numerous breeds of fighting-bulls, most of which are distinguished by some characteristic of form or temper, often due to the quality of the pasturage or the conformation of the ground on which they are bred; thus those proceeding from the mountainous district of Colmenar are heavy of leg and have great staying power, and are generally difficult to deal with, for, having fixed on one of their tormentors, they pursue him obstinately, taking little notice of the waving cloaks of those who endeavour to distract their attention from their intended victim. Those bred on the flat districts of Andalucía are, on the contrary, light of limb and swift of attack, while their temper is generally such as to enable the torero to show his skill to more advantage. The race of fighting-bulls which boasts the longest pedigree is that commonly known as 'Razo del Portillo,' whose antiquity can be traced to the sixteenth century,

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though many assign it an origin still more remote. It is not always, however, the most ancient breeds that are considered the most formidable, for at the present time, that which is the most dreaded by the toreros is undoubtedly the Miura, which only dates from the year 1848. These bulls, besides possessing enormous strength and ferocity, are frequently endowed with more sagacity than is usual in the bovine race, charging full at the body of the bull-fighter, and appearing to despise the flaunting cloak with which he endeavours to deceive them. As a specimen of the power and combativeness of these murderous Miuras we may take the bull Jaqueta, who in the Plaza of Cordoba, on the 31st June 1866, succeeded in killing ten horses and wounding several more, receiving unflinchingly thirty-six lance wounds from the picadors.

When fighting-bulls have reached the age of two years it becomes necessary to try their courage. There are several ways of doing this, one of which is the 'Tienta por acoso,' or trial by pursuit, which is accomplished in the following manner. The herd is driven to suitable open country and surrounded by a number of horsemen, armed with long lances; a bull is then separated from the herd and pursued by two of these horsemen, until, becoming tired, his speed slackens, whereupon one of the riders lowers his lance and pricks him just above the root of the tail, which causes him to fall to the ground. On regaining his feet he usually sets off again, and is again pursued, the operation being repeated until he turns and faces his persecutors, one of whom advances and incites the

THE COURT OF THE ORANGE TREES, CÓRDOBA



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animal to charge him. If the young bull is courageous he instantly does so, and is met by the point of his opponent's lance, receiving a prick in the shoulder. Should he repeat the attack two or more times he is hailed as a 'toro bravo' and is destined to die in the arena, but if, on the contrary, he prove cowardly, fearing to face the lance, he is straightway condemned to pass the rest of his days as a beast of burden. These trials are exceedingly amusing to watch, and are witnessed by a number of invited guests, who afterwards have an opportunity of displaying their tauromachic skill, a few of the disqualified animals being put at their disposition for this purpose. This display of amateur bull-fighting is productive of much mirth, and though accidents are frequent they are rarely of a serious character. Another method is to test the animals one by one in a corral, in which case only one picador is necessary, who is assisted in his operations by a man on foot with a cloak. The same tests are also applied to young cows, for it is essential that the future mothers of fighting-bulls should be possessed of no mean degree of combativeness.

A fighting-bull attains his full strength when four or five years old, and this is the age at which he usually enters the arena ; if of a first-class breed and in proper condition he is worth from 1500 to 2000 pesetas.

The animals are usually sold by the 'Corrida,' six or eight at a time, and are now nearly always conveyed to their destination by rail, imprisoned in specially contrived boxes (cajones). This method is, of course, infinitely more convenient than the old-

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fashioned 'encierro,' which, however, has the merit of being exciting and picturesque. The bulls, accompanied by a number of 'cabestros,' or trained bell-oxen, are conducted by vaqueros to pasture grounds outside the town in which they are to be fought. On the night before the bull-fight every good 'aficionado' who possesses or can borrow a steed, mounts and rides forth, armed with lance and clad in 'traje de garrochista,' the appropriate sporting attire for these occasions. They help the vaqueros to round up the herd, and then follow it as it is driven towards its destination. As they approach the outskirts of the town the bulls are urged to a gallop, and this weird midnight procession sweeps up the deserted streets like a whirlwind; the bellowing of the cattle mingling with the thunder of hoofs and the shouts of the drivers. As they near the Plaza the great gates of the corral are thrown open and the mounted vaquero who precedes the herd dashes in, immediately making his escape by an opposite door, which is closed behind him. After him come the panic-stricken bulls, plunging, snorting, and bellowing; the great gates slam to on their heels and they are imprisoned. Three or four hours before the bull-fight the animals are separated, each one being confined in a small dark cell, or 'chiquero,' which communicates with the Plaza.

All Bull-rings are constructed on the same general plan, which is the following: Round the actual arena runs the barrera, a strong wooden barrier of some five feet in height. Around the barrera, which is usually painted dull red, and at about eighteen inches from the

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ground, runs a ledge on which the torero places one foot to aid him when vaulting the barrier. This ledge is painted white so that it can be the more clearly seen. Behind the barrier the Plaza is encircled by the 'callejón' a lane of some two yards in width, on the farther side of which rise the tiers of seats for the accommodation of the spectators. The presidential box is situated on the shady side of the Plaza, opposite to the doors of the 'chiqueros,' on each side of which are two large gateways, one for the entrance of the 'cuadrillas' and the other called the 'Puerta del Arrastre,' through which are drawn out the carcasses of the bulls and those of the horses which they have slain.

Attached to every Plaza of importance is a small infirmary, and during the bull-fight a number of doctors and a priest are in attendance to administer to the needs, corporeal and spiritual, of the wounded. There is also a small chapel in which the toreros perform their orisons, and in which is laid out the body of any unfortunate who may meet his death in the arena.

The number of matadors engaged for a bull-fight varies from one to four, according to the importance of the function. Each one is assisted by his cuadrilla—which consists of two picadors, three or four banderilleros, and a puntillero, who gives the 'coup de grâce' to a bull which the matador has failed to kill outright by severing the spinal cord with a heavy stabbing weapon called a 'puntilla.'

At the commencement of the proceedings, the toreros enter in procession, the matadors leading, followed by their banderilleros and picadors, while the

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rear is brought up by the attendants of the Plaza and the Arrastres, gaily caparisoned teams of mules for dragging out the carcasses of the beasts killed in the combat. In front of the procession ride two Alguaziles, dressed in old time costumes of black velvet and wearing hats adorned with bright-coloured ostrich plumes. The toreros salute the president, and the matador of longest standing, who has the right to kill the first bull, proceeds to dispose of his forces in the following manner : his two picadors, armed with stout lances and supported by a banderillero with a cloak, are placed close to the barrier some dozen yards to the left of the doors of the 'chiqueros.' Opposite to these doors stand the first and second matadors, while two banderilleros are generally placed between them and the picadors. All these combatants stand near the barrier, behind which the remaining members of the cuadrillas await their turn.

The president now delivers the key to an Alguazil, who in his turn delivers it to the guardian of the 'chiquero.' The Alguazil escapes at a gallop, and the doors are thrown open.

Out rushes the bull, rejoicing in his new-found liberty, and the 'primer tercio' or first part of the fight commences. If a bull does not immediately make for the picadors, he is tackled by a banderillero, who 'runs' him, that is to say, flies before him, trailing his cloak and imparting to it a zig-zag movement which puzzles the brute, making him slacken his speed, thus allowing the man to escape. This operation is repeated several times, during which the behaviour of the bull is care-

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fully studied by the matador, who is thus able to judge of its character, power, and swiftness, and consequently so order the battle that in the final act of the drama the brute may face him with diminished strength, though with unabated courage.

At this stage the matador advances into the arena, and being charged by the bull, performs a series of graceful passes with his cloak, all of which should be carefully chosen with the object of correcting any defect which the animal may have displayed. In this way a bull that holds its head too high is induced to carry it lower, or one that rushes furiously about the arena, feinting at everything, but showing little disposition for resolute attack, may be so changed that it will stubbornly assail the first object that catches its attention. Now comes the 'Suerte de picar,' and the picadors, who have probably by this time taken up a different position in the arena, couch their lances and prepare for the onslaught. These lances are made of beechwood and are about three yards in length, tipped with a short triangular iron head, which is bound round with stout cord in such a way as to prevent it making a wound of more than an inch in depth.

There are several ways in which the picadors may receive the bull's attack, but in all of these the main principles are the same, the object being to plant the lance in the bull's shoulder as he lowers his head to strike, at the same time endeavouring to save the horse by making it swerve sharply to the left. This latter part of the business, however, is well nigh impossible, for the worn-out old hacks which nowadays are pro-

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vided for the picadors are naturally incapable of performing the manœuvres required of them. Thus it is that the cruel horns generally find their billet, and horse and rider come crashing to the ground. Now the matador darts forward, and displaying his cloak, draws off the bull from the fallen picador, who is unable to rise owing to the heavy armour which encases his right leg.

When the bull will no longer face the lances, or when it is thought that he has been sufficiently chastised, the president makes a sign, and a trumpet sounds warning the picadors to retire and make way for the banderilleros.

The second act of the tragedy is characterised by none of those scenes of blood and brutality which have disfigured the first. In place of the ponderous picador, straining every nerve to keep the infuriated bull at bay, appears the agile banderillero, and what has hitherto been little more than an exhibition of brute strength now becomes one of genuine skill and courage.

The 'banderilla' is a stick covered with bright coloured paper and adorned with ribbons, having at one end a short barbed iron head, the whole measuring about twenty-seven inches in length. The duty of the banderilleros is to plant a pair of these close together in the nape of the bull's neck, and there are nine classical manners of doing it, all of them difficult and perilous in the extreme. Three pairs of banderillas are generally planted in the neck of each bull, one often by the matador himself, and on special occasions all three. Again the trumpet sounds, and now the matador,

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armed with sword and muleta, steps forward, and after having in a short speech dedicated the death of the bull to the president or some other favoured person or persons, throws his hat among the spectators and faces his adversary. By a series of skilful passes the matador now proceeds to play the bull into a suitable position for receiving the death-stroke. This position is all-important, for if the animal's head is either too high or too low, or its fore and hind feet not correctly set together, the stroke cannot take effect, and to attempt its delivery would be suicidal. When the brute has been made to stand in the required manner, the matador places himself in front of it, a couple of yards from and in a line with its right horn ; then, turning his left side towards his adversary, he advances his left hand, in which he holds the muleta, taking care that the bull's attention is fixed on the scarlet cloth. Raising the sword to the level of his breast he glances along the steel, aiming at a spot between the shoulder-blades, then, darting forward, he covers the brute's eyes with the muleta and at the same instant delivers the fatal thrust.

This is the 'Suerte de Volapié,' the mode of attack which has now almost entirely superseded the old 'Suerte de recibir' invented by Francisco Romero. There are, however, several other methods which are employed as occasion demands, the most common of these being the 'descabello,' which consists in severing the cervical vertebræ with the point of the sword. Of all these methods the Volapié is undoubtedly the most fraught with peril for the matador, for, in performing it, he avoids with difficulty the needle-pointed horns which

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often pass within an inch of his body ; thus serious and even fatal accidents are of common occurrence.

The bull having been killed, his carcass is removed with those of his equine victims ; bloodstains are covered up with sand, another bull is let out and the battle begins afresh. Fifteen minutes of life is allowed the bull from the time that he enters the arena, and if this is exceeded howls and execrations mark the disapproval of the mob, for the bull-fight is the only thing in which a lack of punctuality will call forth a protestation from the apathetic Iberians.

Toreros are notoriously superstitious and there are many anecdotes illustrative of this, their common weakness. Among the things which most inspire them with the presage of coming evil may be mentioned a squint-eyed person, a funeral crossing their path when on the way to the Bull-ring, and anything bearing the slightest resemblance to a serpent ; though this latter superstition is shared by all Spaniards to such an extent that the reptile is on no occasion referred to by name, but is spoken of with respectful awe as 'la bicha' (the female beast), and even then the dreaded word is accompanied by much crossing of the fingers and other heathen rites calculated to avert misfortune.

Many gipsy toreros have an inexplicable horror of black bulls, and this was the case with 'Lavi' and 'Chicorro,' both well-known matadors and men of tried courage, who were, however, unable to conceal their terror when it fell to their lots to tackle one of this colour.

Juan León, the heroic pupil of Curro Guillén, was

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a firm believer in the proverb 'Dia de cero, en la piel agujero,' and was therefore extremely averse to fighting on either the 10th, 20th or 30th of the month. Obsessed by this idea, he implored Guillén not to fulfil his contract to appear in the Bull-ring of Ronda on the 20th May 1820, being certain that either one or other of them was bound to come to grief. Guillén, however, treated the matter as a joke, insisted on fulfilling the engagement, and, by a curious coincidence, was killed.

A more famous case is that of 'Espartero,' who, while driving to the Plaza in company with his cuadrilla on that fateful afternoon when he was gored to death by the Miura bull Perdigón, was thrown into a state of extreme dejection by the sight of a funeral crossing the road which they were following. His banderilleros did everything in their power to cheer him and banish the incident from his mind; nothing availed, however, and during the remainder of the drive he sat with his head sunk upon his chest, continually muttering 'Mala pata, mala pata! compañeros.' 'Bad luck, bad luck! comrades.'

ARANJUEZ AND TOLEDO

CHAPTER VIII

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LEAVING Madrid, we directed our course southward to Aranjuez. The line soon after leaving Madrid crosses the Manzanares, whose fetid waters at this point exhale a nauseating odour. It then traverses a tawny, treeless waste, whose sole point of interest is a curious rounded hill which rises abruptly from the plain, and is proudly pointed out, by the natives of that part of the world, to mark the exact centre of Spain. With relief one at length catches sight of Aranjuez, encircled by a belt of verdure and looking a veritable oasis in the wilderness.

Aranjuez seems to have changed little from the days of Swinburne, who in 1776 thus admirably described it : ‘ The situation of this place renders it one of the most agreeable residences I know belonging to a sovereign prince. It stands in a very large plain, surrounded with bare hills, which to be sure, are excessively ugly ; but they seldom appear, being very well hidden by the noble rows of trees that extend across the flat in every direction.

‘ The finest avenue, called the “ Calle de la Reyna,” is three miles long, quite straight from the Palace gate, crossing the Tagus twice before it loses itself in the thickets, where some noble spreading elms and weeping

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poplars hang beautifully over the deep, still pool. Near this road is a flower-garden for the spring, laid out with great taste by Mr. Wall during his ministry. The gay variety of flowers at this time of year is particularly pleasing to the eye ; but its beauty soon fades on the approach of summer. As the weather grows hot, the company that chooses to walk retires to a garden in an island of the Tagus, on the north side of the Palace. This is an heavenly place, cut into various walks and circular lawns, which in their primitive state may have been very stiff and formal ; but in the course of a century, Nature has obliterated the regular forms of art ; the trees have swelled out beyond the line traced for them, and destroyed the enfilade, by advancing into the walks, or retiring from them. The sweet flowering shrubs, instead of being clipped and kept down, have been allowed to shoot up into trees, and hang over the statues and fountains they were originally meant to serve as fences to. The jets d'eau dash up among the trees, and add fresh verdure to the leaves. The terraces and balustrades built along the river are now overgrown with roses, and other luxuriant bushes, hanging down into the stream, which is darkened by the large trees growing on the opposite banks. Many of the statues, groupes and fountains, are handsome, some masterly, the works of Algardi : all are placed in charming points of view, either in open circular spots at a distance from the trees, or else in gloomy arbours, and retired angles of the wood.'

Isabella the Catholic often resided at Aranjuez, and her grandson Charles v. built a shooting-box there,

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which was afterwards enlarged by Philip II., who ordained that it should be thenceforth a 'real sitio' or royal residence. This new honour was not welcomed by the inhabitants of the village with the enthusiasm that might be expected, for with the idea of extending his hunting-grounds he remorselessly rooted up the vines with which the adjacent hills were covered. Thus robbed of their means of subsistence, the poor villagers sought refuge elsewhere, and the surrounding country was transformed into a howling wilderness, probably much to the satisfaction of the splenetic monarch.

Philip's château suffered severely from fire in 1660, and again in 1665, and was eventually entirely rebuilt in the French style by Philip V. in 1727. Another serious fire occurred in 1748, but the damage was restored by Ferdinand VI., the château being subsequently much enlarged by his stepbrother Charles III., who also expended vast sums in rebuilding and beautifying the town. Before this there had been practically no accommodation for the courtiers and ambassadors who accompanied the monarch thither, and they were obliged to find what quarters they could in miserable huts or caves dug in the hillside, such as are now occupied by the gipsies of Granada.

On one occasion, during a trogloditic dinner-party presided over by the Papal Nuncio, a coach broke through the roof and landed with a crash on the table. Though the representative of His Holiness suffered no personal damage an immense scandal was caused thereby, and Charles, thinking it high time to provide

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more suitable housing for his suite, immediately began the rebuilding of the town as it stands to-day.

After a short stay at Aranjuez we took train, and in due course arrived at Toledo, whose railway station is small and mean, though doubtless fulfilling the needs of a city so fallen from her ancient splendour. It is situated at some distance from the town at the extremity of a dusty Alameda, which turns abruptly to the left under the San Servando heights. It is on rounding this bend that Toledo first reveals herself, and the traveller must be unemotional indeed who cannot be roused to enthusiasm by the sight of a city so splendidly situated and so mediæval in aspect.

Toledo sits on an eminence two-thirds of whose base is encircled by the swirling, muddy waters of the Tagus, which here flows through a deep and rocky gorge. The city is surrounded by two belts of ancient walls and is dominated by the Alcázar, a great, square, prison-like building, having at each angle a tower surmounted by a pyramidal roof. At opposing extremities of the city, the river is crossed by two venerable bridges, one the Puente de San Martin, the other the famous Alcántara, which, though restored and fortified by the Christians, was first erected by the Moors in the ninth century. Facing the city on the barren heights above the Alcántara rise the ruins of the ancient castle of San Servando, occupying the site of a Benedictine convent of that name, wherein, according to the *Romancero*, the good Cid Campeador kept vigil before entering Toledo with his followers. In the centre of the city stands the cathedral, Toledo's crowning glory.

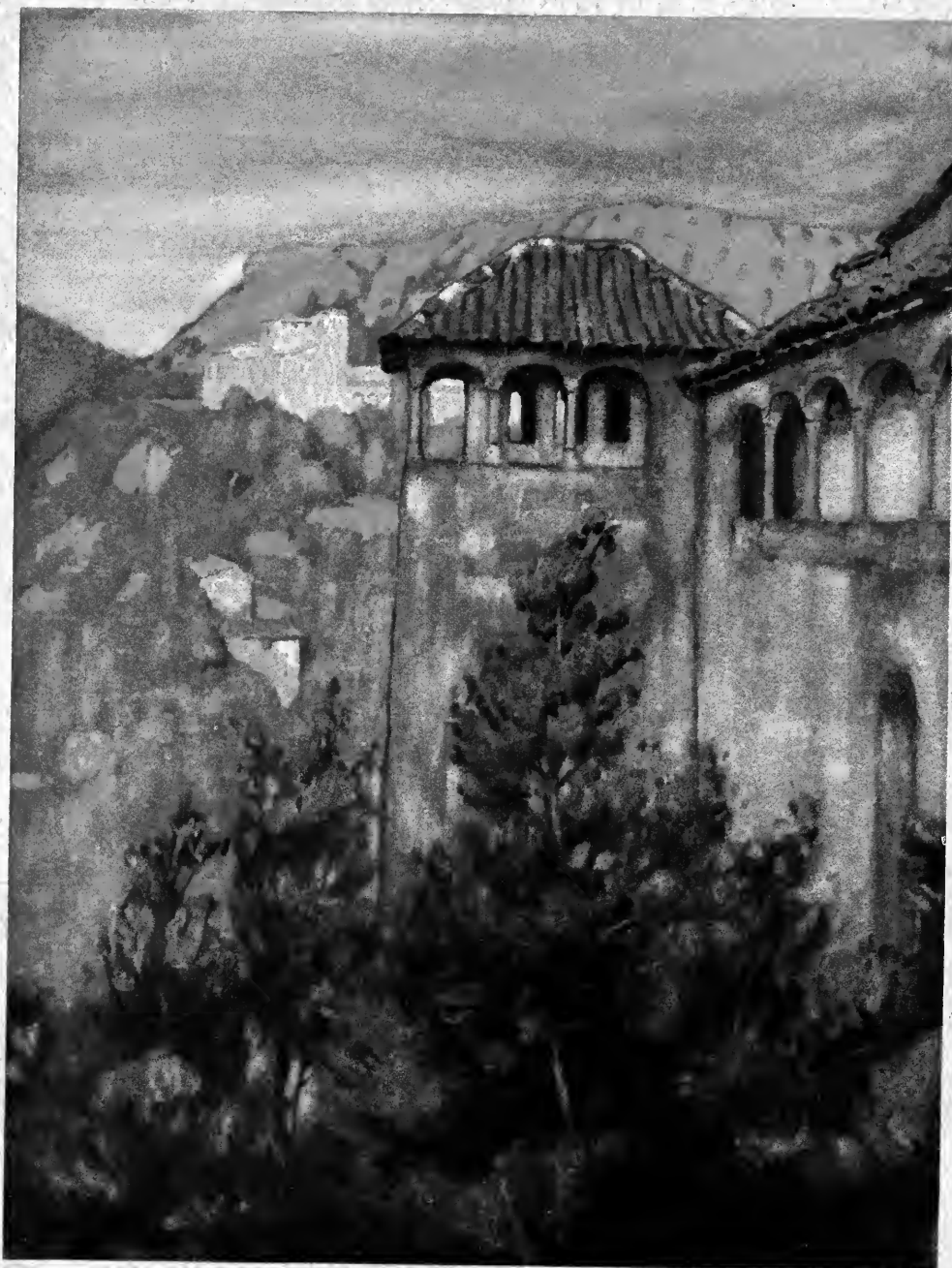
THE ALHAMBRA AT SUNSET

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Its exterior is not impressive, for it occupies a low site, and is so hemmed in by houses that it is with difficulty one obtains an idea of its general construction; however, the disappointment caused by this drawback is instantly dispelled when, passing from the blinding glare of the sunlight, one penetrates into the gloom and majesty of the vast interior. On the threshold one pauses instinctively, experiencing a sensation of reluctance to advance and inspect the details of this glorious edifice, for so completely satisfying is the effect of the whole that one fears, by encountering some inharmonious part, to destroy the solemnity of the first impression. Near a hundred columns support the lofty roof, and between their mighty shafts the wonderful painted glass of the windows glows with the tints of the ruby, the sapphire and the topaz. The enormous edifice is surrounded by chapels, each one of which is worthy of the most minute inspection, while days might be spent in examining the wonderful carving of the choir, but these things fade into insignificance before the magnificent Capilla Mayor, with its wonderfully wrought grille and huge carved reredos, whose myriad exquisite details, enriched with painting and antique gilt, blend into a whole of indescribable gorgeousness. But Toledo abounds in beautiful churches, and San Juan de los Reyes, Santa Maria la Blanca, El Cristo de la Vega, and a host of others, will keep the student of ecclesiastical architecture happily employed for many weeks. Santa Maria la Blanca is in the Mudéjar style and was erected in the thirteenth century as a synagogue, for in those days

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the Jews of Toledo were many and wealthy, and indeed the very foundation of the city is attributed to them: the name, according to some, being derived from Toledoth, which in Hebrew signifies 'City of Generations'; and this may well be so, for it is practically certain that there was a large Hebrew community in the Peninsula quite a thousand years before the Christian era. Early in the days of Visigothic rule the Jews were treated with toleration, but civilisation came to the northern conquerors in the form of Christianity, and their eyes were opened to the vast advantage to be derived from the wealthy Hebrew community in their midst. Persecution followed, and under the cloak of religion the Jew and his gold were soon and forcibly parted. This persecution becoming intolerable, the Jews, believing that more justice and humanity might be expected from Mohammedan than Christian, covertly communicated with the Arab conquerors of Northern Africa, with the result that Tarik and his legions were soon sweeping over the Peninsula. Toledo fell, and a new era of peace and prosperity began for the Hebrew population, whose superior learning and unrivalled skill in medicine, mathematics, and astronomy was fully appreciated by the Moors. But this happy state of affairs was not to continue indefinitely, for in 1085 Toledo surrendered to Alphonso VI., and again the unhappy Jew was made to feel the heavy hand of the conquering Nazarene. The era of persecution which now commenced lasted for more than three hundred years, and culminated in the massacre caused by that bloodthirsty bigot San Vicente Ferrer, when

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the Hebrew community was practically exterminated. It is true that during these three hundred years the race enjoyed brief periods of tranquillity. During the reigns of Alphonso VIII. and Alphonso the Learned they were treated with toleration, and that notorious monarch Don Pedro the Cruel showed them no small favour, having one of their number, by name Samuel Levi, for treasurer. Levi's fabulous wealth, however, aroused the cupidity of the treacherous Pedro, who did not hesitate to seize it, having previously murdered its owner. The house which now serves as the Museum of El Greco, and which that painter is erroneously supposed to have inhabited, stands on the site of the palace built by the Jewish treasurer, and beneath it are still to be seen the cellars in which the unfortunate Levi is thought to have stored his gold. After their final expulsion by Ferdinand and Isabella, many of the Toledan Jews, in common with their brethren from other parts of the Peninsula, sought refuge in Turkey, where their descendants still converse amongst each other in the Castilian tongue.

The streets of Toledo are essentially Oriental in character, many of them being so narrow that the sun never warms the lower stories of the tall decaying houses which flank them, while the passer-by is continually obliged to take refuge in a doorway to avoid a laden donkey, whose baskets scrape the wall on either hand. The houses, for the most part, are built of tawny brick, many of them having picturesque and shady patios, whose fine old tiles and plaster arabesques betray Mudéjar workmanship. The windows, heavily

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shuttered on the inside, are guarded on the outside with fine old rejas or iron grilles of curious design, while the massive pillared doorways, quaintly ornamented and furnished with doors of immense solidity generously studded with great iron nails, are a perpetual source of delight to the passing traveller.

Not far from the Alcázar, which, though solid and imposing in appearance, is mostly of modern workmanship and of little interest, is the hub of Toledo, the Plaza de Zocodóvcr, which, as its name indicates, was the old Moorish market-place. Of irregular shape, it is surrounded by old yellow-washed houses built on porticos, under which the principal cafés of the town are situated, while in the central portion, which is railed off, grow a few scrubby acacias, affording shade to stray dogs and loafers. The Zocodóvcr was our favourite resort, and we spent many an amusing hour seated before a café table under the cool shade of the porticos, whence we could study at our leisure the animated scene before us. Processions of emaciated, heavily laden donkeys, with worn-out semi-Oriental trappings from which dangle faded crimson tassels, continually pass and repass. The approach of one of these is heralded by the clanging of the bell which dangles from the neck of the leader, a wise old quadruped, who, following his customary route, leads his patient followers across the sunlit Plaza towards the mouth of an alley, into whose shady depths they disappear one by one. After them stride their 'Arrieros,' sturdy bronzed fellows shod with hempen sandals, and carrying the sticks with which they chastise their long-eared

ARANJUEZ AND TOLEDO

charges stuck slant-wise through the back of the ample woollen fajas with which their loins are encircled. In the Plaza they frequently meet with an acquaintance and pause for an exchange of cigarettes and a few moments' gossip, regardless of their animals, which, with half-shut eyes and switching tails, patiently pursue their way.

Under the shade of an acacia a few beggars, clad in a motley of malodorous rags, are discussing the results of the day's mendicity, meanwhile munching the crusts collected from some refuse-heap and eyeing the rest of the world askance. They receive the blessing, though not the alms, of a dignitary of the Church, who, haughty and corpulent, strides across the Plaza, sheltering himself from the scorching sun beneath an enormous black silk umbrella. As he approaches the mouth of the Calle de la Silleria, silence falls on a group of sluttish women, who have hitherto been discussing their neighbours' affairs with strident verbosity. They salute him obsequiously, and one of them who has a couple of brats clinging to her skirts pushes them forward, so that they may kiss the plump, greasy hand of the potent priest.

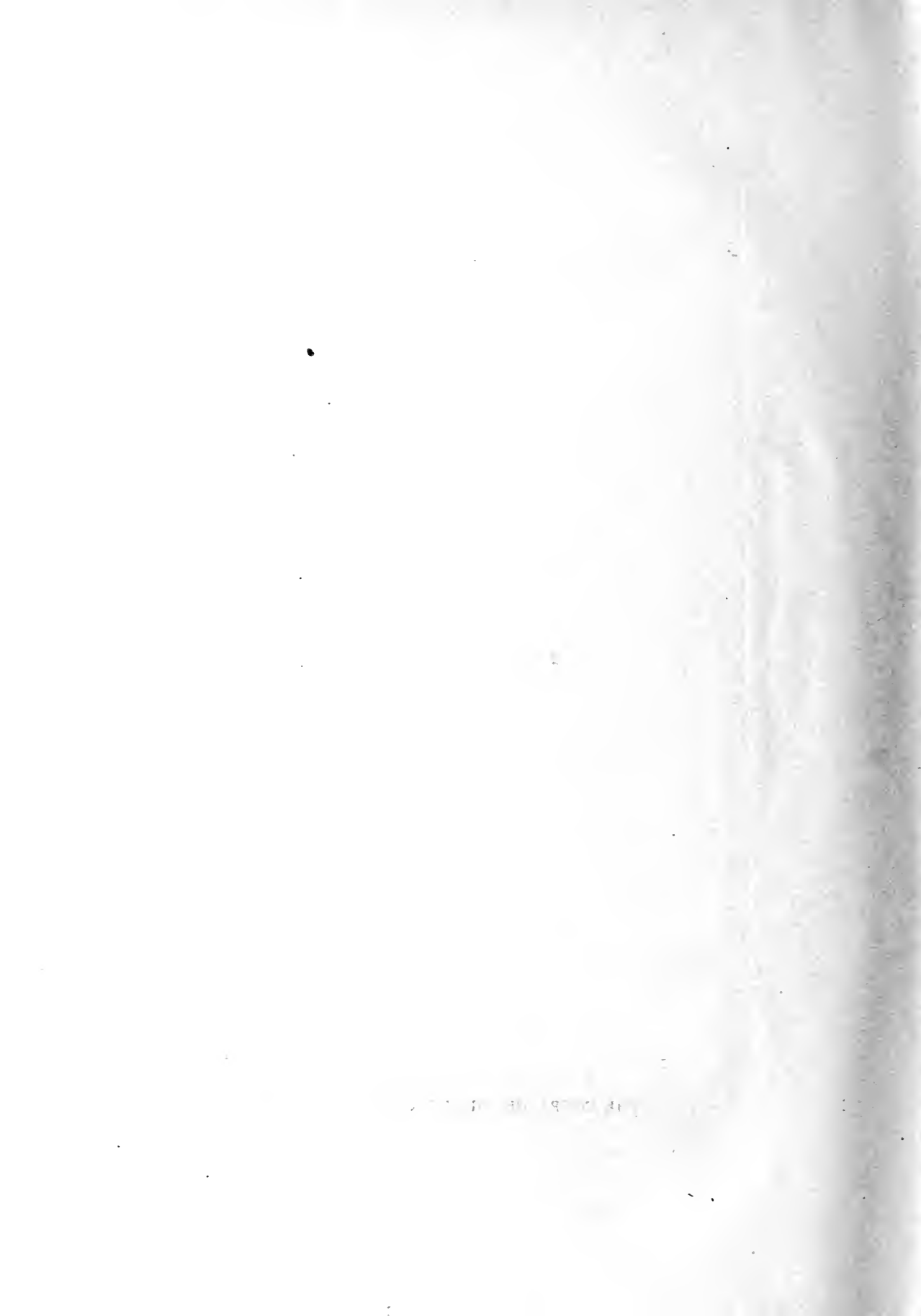
In one corner of the Plaza stands a picturesque old diligence, which plies between Toledo and a neighbouring village. Half a dozen mules are attached to this shandrydan, their primitive though complicated harness hung with clusters of bells, which jingle merrily whenever one of the animals stirs. On the box slumbers the driver, his old-fashioned sombrero pulled forward over his nose, while hard by lounges the sun-burnt dusty 'Zagál' chatting with some country folk, who are

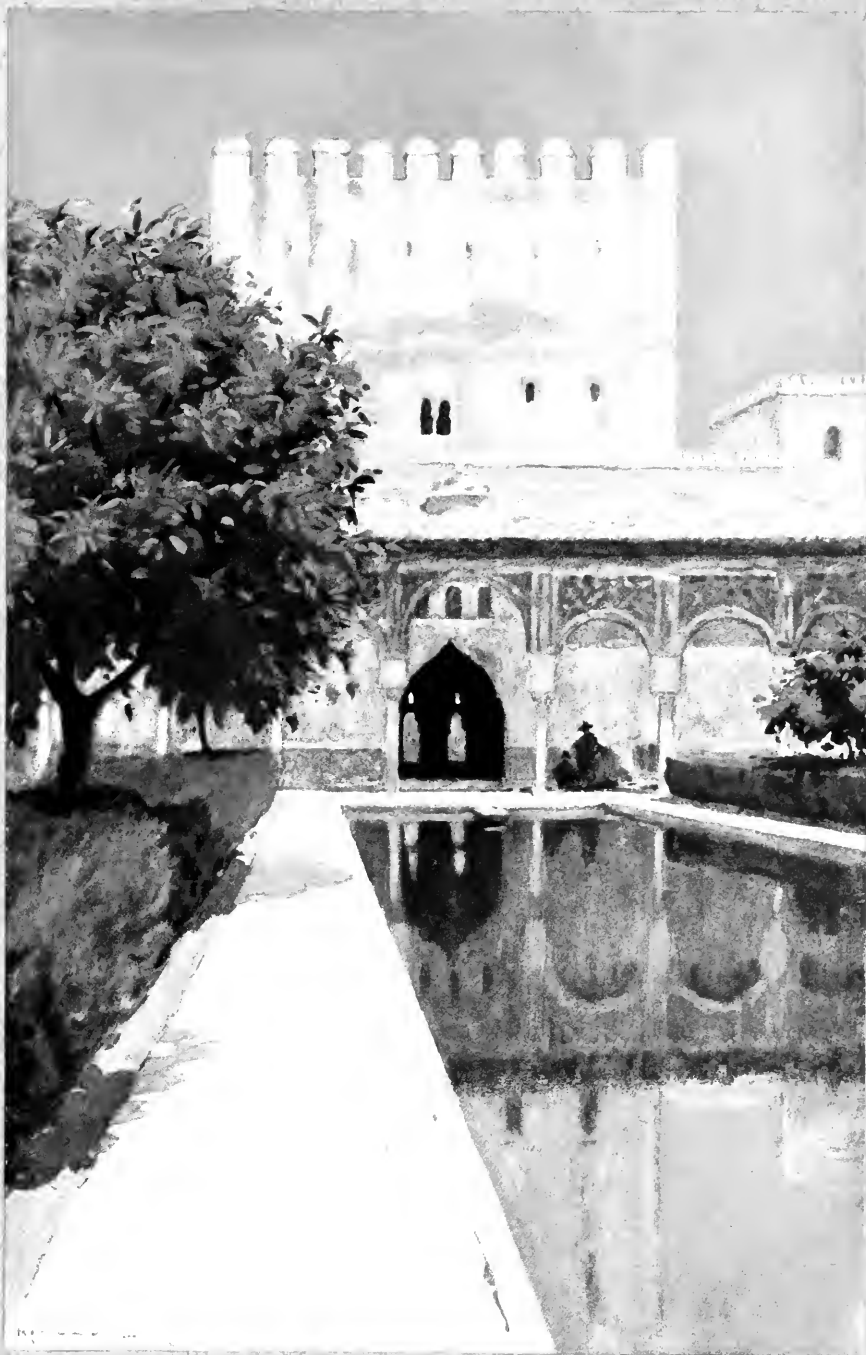
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arranging their many packages and baskets in the vehicle preparatory to taking their seats. The women of this party wear full short skirts. Around their shoulders are thrown small embroidered shawls, while their heads are protected by gaily coloured handkerchiefs. The dress of the men is sombre, but viewed from the side the outlines are remarkable, for, having no trouser pockets, they stuff their various small belongings into the folds of their woollen sashes, causing their stomachs to project accordingly. Towards evening the military cadets from the Alcázar troop down and enliven the Plaza with their bright uniforms, while at the same time the Calle del Comercio belches forth a battalion of minor priests, their soutanes unbrushed and their chins unshaven, who parade under the porticos smoking cigarettes and casting regretful glances at the be vies of black-haired Toledanas, who, with fluttering fans, promenade the centre of the Plaza under the dust-strewn pollarded acacias.

LA MANCHA

THE COURT OF THE MYRTLES—ALHAMBRA





CHAPTER IX

LA MANCHA

IT had long been our ambition to make a pilgrimage to the land of the 'Ingenioso Hidalgo,' that vast desolate tract of Castilla la Nueva called La Mancha, which lies between the province of Toledo and the wilds of the Sierra Morena. We accordingly took our tickets to Manzanares as being the most convenient spot from which to make our proposed excursions to the scenes made famous by the immortal romance of Cervantes. We did not arrive without adventure however, for not long after leaving Arunjuéz, H——, who was looking out of the window, announced with some emotion that our carriage must be on fire, for dense volumes of smoke were issuing from under the next compartment. The situation, however, was not so alarming as might be supposed, for already the train was slackening speed preparatory to entering the little station of Tembleque.

When it had come to a standstill we got out with all speed, our example being quickly followed by the other passengers, who excitedly drew the attention of the railway officials to the nascent conflagration. The officials, however, took the matter very philosophically, and having uncoupled the burning coach in the most leisurely manner, shunted it on to a siding, and there

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apparently left it to its fate. They then joined up the train and requested us to re-embark, which, however, was not easily accomplished, seeing that each compartment was already chock-full. H——, however, solved the difficulty by ingratiating himself with the guard, who found us quarters in his van, and thus we finished the journey. On arriving at the station of Manzanares, we looked about for somebody who might inform us where to lodge. We soon found an obliging individual who spoke highly of a certain ‘Casa de Huéspedes’ kept by an aged and highly respectable female; he, moreover, offered to conduct us thither. Accordingly, under his guidance we set out, followed by a few loafers to whom we entrusted our impedimenta. After a short walk we came to a halt before the door of a modest house, which, after much knocking, was opened by a sluttish-looking servant. Apparently terrified, she slammed the door in our faces without waiting to hear our request for accommodation. Undiscouraged, we again knocked lustily, whereupon the door was re-opened, this time by the mistress herself, a stern, swarthy dame dressed in black, and having on her upper lip something more than an embryo moustache. At first she seemed to regard us with some complacency, but her eye falling on H—— who was carrying his guitar, her demeanour changed, ‘Ah!’ said she, ‘strolling musicians! I have no room for the likes of you.’ We protested, but in vain, ‘No puedo, señores,’ quoth she truculently, and turning on her heel with dignity shut the door.

The Fonda was now our only refuge, and thither we bent our steps in some dejection, for we had learnt that

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it enjoyed no great reputation either for the cleanliness of its apartments or the excellence of its food. This time no forbidding female barred our passage, and we entered to find ourselves in a mean and ill-lit patio, whose only occupant was an enormously fat woman who sat in a rocking-chair fanning herself and breathing stertorously. Concluding this to be the landlady, we addressed her, but obesity seemed to have rendered her almost speechless, and after one or two fruitless attempts to reply to our inquiries, she rolled her eyes towards an open door and in a wheezing falsetto called for her husband. This worthy was not long in making his appearance. Though answering to the name of Sancho, he in no way resembled his namesake, the faithful squire, for he was an undersized emaciated fellow, with a countenance expressive of evil and cunning.

Nevertheless, he saluted us politely enough, and conducted us to our rooms, which we soon discovered to be both filthy and verminous. But we had long since learnt to bear these things philosophically, for a Spanish innkeeper receives a complaint of this kind with amused contempt, being astonished that one should be so squeamish as to molest him in the matter of such trifles. Our first business was to find the owner of a 'carro' or mule cart, who would undertake to drive us to the places which we wished to visit. Sancho readily undertook this task, and that very evening introduced a youth named Rafael, with whom, after much chaffering, we were able to make satisfactory terms. Rafael, who was the proud owner of a tall, bony mule and a springless tilt-cart, was hardly more prepossessing in appearance than

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the worthy innkeeper, but apart from a weakness to boast of his exploits in card-sharpping and a predilection for relating with peculiar relish minute details of certain grisly murders which had recently been committed in the neighbourhood, and in which friends of his, if not his blood relations, had taken unpleasantly prominent parts, we found him an excellent fellow.

Manzanares is a typical Manchegan town. The cobble-paved streets are mostly wide, and are flanked by houses more Andalucian than Castilian in character, being rarely more than one story high, and often consisting of a ground floor only. They are almost invariably whitewashed, which in that treeless country and under that fierce sun makes the glare almost unendurable.

The old parish church is exceedingly quaint, and we noted with interest that its south façade, which faces the Plaza Mayor, is furnished with balconies, whence in the good old days the clergy and local magnates were wont to watch the bull-fights.

Manzanares does a considerable trade in the famous Manchegan wine which takes its name from the town of Valdepeñas, situated some eighteen miles to the south. Needless to say, the manner in which this wine is made is as archaic as most other things in the Peninsula.

The grapes are gathered in October and are conveyed to the press, where they are trodden out by men shod with sandals of esparto grass. The juice runs off into 'Tinajas,' enormous earthen jars, which are kept half-buried in the ground. Here it is allowed to ferment, being ready for consumption in about three

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months. Valdepeñas somewhat resembles Burgundy in flavour, and indeed the grapes from which it is made are Burgundy grapes which were transplanted hither many centuries ago. Great quantities of it are drunk in Madrid and also in Andalucia, but it is supposed to deteriorate less when voyaging northwards than southwards.

We decided that our first excursion should be to Argamasilla de Alba, that 'certain village in La Mancha' which Cervantes chose as the birthplace of his immortal hero, and situated six good Spanish leagues to the north-east of Manzanares.

Wishing to arrive at our destination in time for the midday meal, we set out early, it being barely six o'clock when we rattled and jolted out of Manzanares ensconced in Rafael's springless tilt-cart. On leaving the outskirts of the town we saw before us the great Manchegan plain, stretching with scarce an undulation to the foot of the distant Sierra de Toledo, whose purple silhouette bounded the northern horizon. As far as the eye could see, no tree or human habitation broke the monotony of the sun-baked flats, which were innocent of all vegetation save an occasional gigantic thistle, whose gaunt and withered aspect only served to emphasise the desolation of the landscape. Across this waste we headed, following a track so primitive that we were soon glad to get down and pursue the journey on foot, for the jolting of the 'carro' had become unbearable. As we had not breakfasted before our departure, and had omitted to take provisions with us, we were not sorry when towards nine o'clock we saw before us one

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of those great vineyards for which La Mancha is famous, for there we knew we should find a keeper who for a few pence would supply us with enough grapes to make a hearty meal. In this we were not deceived, for at our approach a picturesque figure rose from among the vines and advanced towards us. His head was covered with the 'montera,' that leathern cap with ear-flaps, typical of La Mancha. He wore a blue shirt and black velvet shorts, while he was shod with primitive leather sandals whose thongs were bound about his legs and tied below the knee. Over one shoulder was thrown a striped blanket, while the other supported an antique fowling-piece. To this archaic figure we made known our wants, whereupon he re-entered the vineyard and soon returned with several bunches of the choicest grapes, off which we made our breakfast. For a mile or so the track ran between the vines, which, as is usual in Spain, were not supported upon sticks but allowed to trail at will on the ground. The vineyard passed, we again entered the desolate plains, and had not proceeded far before a flock of magnificent bustards rose before us. H——, who is an enthusiastic sportsman, instantly produced a Browning pistol and blazed away, but of course without result. From time to time we came upon a low stone cross, marking the scene of some wayside tragedy. The majority, though old and weather-worn, bore inscriptions which were still decipherable. We examined them, but found them to be of little interest, for they merely stated that 'here a man was murdered' (*aquí mataron á un hombre*). But one which was of later date we did not trouble to

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decipher, for Rafael, who seemed suspiciously conversant with the circumstances of the crime, related them to us in sanguinary detail. Not far from this the putrefying carcass of a mule was stretched across the track, and as we approached, a great lean hound who was tearing at it looked up from his carrion feast, then slunk off among the thistles. Here, too, we had trouble with our mule, who, exhibiting every sign of terror, refused to pass his dead comrade. So wild were his capers that they threatened to overturn the 'carro,' and we were ultimately obliged to make a wide *détour*.

Soon after we had sighted the gleaming white houses of Argamasilla in the distance, we witnessed an astonishing effect of mirage. From the plain ascended a flickering vapour which seemed to resolve itself into a vast lagoon. We stood as though on an island, the illusionary waters surrounding us on every side and extending to the horizon, where they lapped about the base of the distant Sierra, while Argamasilla rose from them like a village of the Venetian lagoons, its houses and poplars faultlessly reflected on their placid surface. But the phenomenon was of short duration ; a breeze appeared to stir the face of the waters, which melted into vapour and presently was no more. Though Argamasilla seemed to be close at hand it was some hours before we reached it, for in that clear air distances are deceiving. It was past one o'clock before we drew up in front of the little Posada, which we found to be clean and comfortable. After a hearty meal served by a smiling host, we started forth to see the sights. Excepting the church and the remains of the old house

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in which tradition says that Cervantes was imprisoned, there is little of interest in Argamasilla. It is a straggling village, composed of low, whitewashed houses with singularly few windows. The trees, however, are more numerous than at Manzanares, for here the Guadiana flows and its banks are lined with majestic poplars. The story goes that Cervantes, during his residence in Argamasilla, having quarrelled with the Alcalde, a certain Pacheco, was imprisoned by this dignitary in an old house, which unfortunately was gutted by fire some years ago, so that now only the outer walls remain. Here it was that the unfortunate author is supposed to have written the first part of the immortal romance, basing the character of Don Quixote on that of Pacheco. In the church there still hangs a contemporary portrait of this Alcalde, which we examined with the greatest interest. Pacheco, lean, lantern-jawed and hollow-eyed, in every way fulfils the description given by Cervantes of his hero. He and his wife are represented in an attitude of prayer, and below the picture is an inscription to the effect that he presented it to the church in gratitude for the recovery of his reason, which had been temporarily deranged. While looking at the picture we made the acquaintance of the priest, a charming and erudite man, who afterwards showed us some rare old editions of *Don Quixote* which he had collected.

The following afternoon we returned to Manzanares, leaving, not unregretfully, our clean and comfortable quarters in the little posada of Argamasilla.

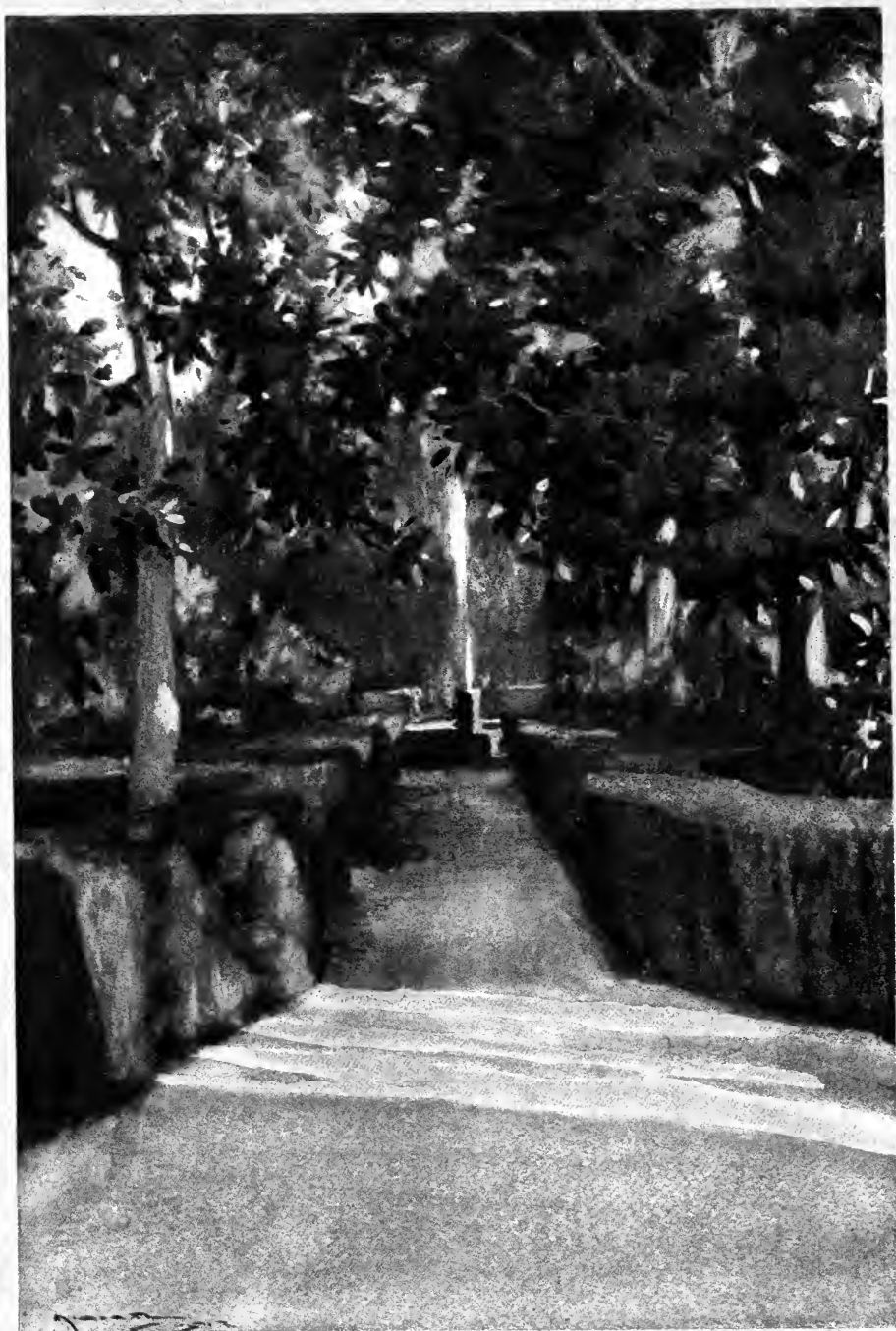
Our next excursion was to the ruins of the Venta

THE GARDENS OF THE GENERALIFE

IN SPAIN

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the train at the station in Madrid was the heat. It was a warm, dry heat, the kind that seeps into your bones and makes you feel like you're in a different world. The air was thick with the scent of orange blossoms, a fragrance that was everywhere. I had heard that Spain was a beautiful country, but I didn't realize how much it would captivate me from the very first moment. The streets were wide and paved with cobblestones, and the buildings were a mix of old and new. I saw people walking in traditional dress, but also modern clothing. It was a blend of old and new, just like the country itself. I was in Spain, and I was in luck.

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de Quesada, which lies some distance to the north, on the high road to Puerto Lápice. It was here that Don Quixote was knighted by the knavish innkeeper, and though little remains of the inn itself, the horse-trough and well are still to be seen, before which the poor Don paraded while watching his armour. This well receives its water from the Guadiana, which flows directly under the inn, following its seven-league subterranean course. Rising in the lakes of Ruidera this mole-like river disappears near Tomelloso, a village not far from Argamasilla, to reappear at Daimiel, its underground course being marked by the line of little lakes which it throws up, and which are poetically called 'Los ojos de Guadiana' (Guadiana's eyes).

Near the source of the Guadiana is the famous cave of Montesinos, which we afterwards visited, descending into its depths and scaring—or perhaps being scared by—the myriad bats that there find refuge.

Hard by, the ruined stronghold of Montiel frowns from a rocky height. Within its walls Don Pedro the Cruel sought refuge after the bloody battle fought on the 13th day of August 1368, which is so graphically described by Froissart. His forces completely routed by those of Trastamara, aided by the gallant Du Guesclin, he escaped from the field accompanied by the faithful Fernando de Castro and eleven other followers. Galloping up to the castle they found the gates open, and entering, were received by the Lord of Montiel, who instantly closed his fortress against the pursuers.

After annihilating the unfortunate followers of Don Pedro, Trastamara and Du Guesclin 'quite fatigued

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with this business of butchery,' encamped before the castle, which they surrounded on all sides. Escape was now impossible for Pedro, and the castle, though strong enough to stand a lengthy siege, was only provisioned for four days, whereupon the unfortunate monarch was much cast down, for he knew that he had little mercy to expect at the hand of his bastard brother, Henry of Trastamara. In desperation Pedro resolved on making an attempt to steal through the hostile forces which encircled him. Waiting till midnight, he and his trusty twelve rode forth from a postern and cautiously descended the winding path. All went well until they reached the base of the hill, when they were confronted by a horseman who, riding forward, challenged them. The foremost member of the party, an Englishman, clapped spurs to his horse and, bending low over its neck, dashed forward, making his escape. Not so, however, the unfortunate Don Pedro, for the challenger, who was a worthy knight called the Bèque de Villaines, seized his bridle, and peering into his face instantly recognised him despite the darkness of the night. Pressing a dagger to his breast, he, Bèque de Villaines, bade him name himself and surrender, whereupon Pedro replied, 'Bèque, Bèque, I am Don Pedro, King of Castile, to whom much wrong has been imputed through evil counsellors. I surrender myself and all my people, but twelve in number, as thy prisoners : we place ourselves under thy guard and disposition. I beseech thee, in the name of thy gentility, that thou put me in a place of safety. I will pay for my ransom whatever sum thou shalt please to

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ask ; for, thank God, I have yet a sufficiency to do that ; but thou must prevent me from falling into the hands of the bastard.'

The Bèque, promising him protection, conducted him to a tent, but scarcely an hour had elapsed before Henry, apprised of his brother's capture, entered it, accompanied by a few followers. For an instant the two antagonists faced each other, then exchanging the bitterest insults, they closed, fighting with tigerish ferocity. They fell and rolled over and over, until at last Don Pedro, getting his brother undermost, plucked out his poniard and was about to strike, when one of Trastamara's gentlemen, seizing Don Pedro's legs, turned him right over so that he sprawled face upwards. Henry, set free by this unchivalrous manœuvre, was able to pin his brother by the throat, and with his own long poniard to transfix him. Thus died Pedro, called by some the Cruel, by others the Just.

Between the towns Manzanares and Valdepeñas there is a bitter and continuous rivalry. This is no uncommon thing in Spain, where every man, convinced that his 'pueblo' is the centre of the universe, looks with a jealous eye on the inhabitants of the neighbouring ones, resenting both their prosperity and their pretensions. Our host, Sancho, being a true son of Manzanares, was much displeased on learning that we intended to break our southern journey at Valdepeñas, and with a view to dissuading us from our project, launched into a violent tirade against the rival town and its inhabitants. But finding our resolve immutable, he sulkily withdrew into the dark recesses of the malodorous

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den wherein he sat or slumbered with his tremendous helpmate, refusing either to aid in our departure or to vouchsafe a farewell word.

Valdepeñas was *en fête*—crowds of peasants in holiday dress were lounging in every street, smoking, spitting, or sucking sweets, while gaudy placards advertised a first-class bull-fight for the afternoon. We found quarters in a comfortable Fonda, most of whose rooms were already occupied by the bull-fighters who were to appear in the Plaza.

The two matadors, both well-known men, one a hawk-faced Cordobés, and the other a strongly-built Bilbaino, paced the patio, obviously in a state of gloomy apprehension, their low spirits being reflected by those of their assistants, who, silent and with solemn faces, sat round a table playing a card game in which none were interested.

So depressing was this spectacle that we made haste to leave them and explore the town. Our first proceeding was to buy seats for the Corrida, which we did with some misgivings, being aware that the tragic forebodings of toreros are too often realised, and though it had been our lot on too many occasions to see unhappy bull-fighters gored, we had not developed that morbid appetite which the Spanish mob invariably displays for such casualties.

Valdepeñas is a more interesting town than Manzanares. It has a quaint old arcaded market-square, which that morning presented a busy scene, being thronged with a gaily coloured crowd of buyers and sellers haggling beneath the many umbrella-like awn-

LA MANCHA

ings which had been erected to protect the wares from the scorching rays of the Manchegan sun. Here are to be seen, as in Toledo, many curious old doorways, and as we wandered through the streets we often paused to admire the intricate ironwork of some romantic balcony or window grille. Being the centre of the Manchegan wine-trade, there are in the town and its outskirts many spacious 'Bodegas,' wherein the ruby Valdepeñas is stored in gargantuan earthen jars. Into one of these cellars we were courteously invited to enter, and were shown over the premises by the polite proprietor, who afterwards made us taste some of his choicest vintages. On taking our seats in the Bull-ring we were surprised to recognise in the person sitting next us a priest who had been our fellow-guest in the Fonda at Madrid, and with whom we had often chatted. It was not his presence that astonished us, for the bull-feast has from time immemorial been patronised by the Church of which he was doubtless a worthy member ; but rather his attire, for instead of clericals he sported a rakish lounge suit, his shaven pate being covered by a sombrero of the sort affected by the 'fancy,' while a scarlet tie flared on his shirt front. From motives of delicacy we at first made no show of recognising him, but he, on the contrary, greeted us effusively, proffering no explanation as to his startling change of costume. As we had anticipated, the bull-fight was a disastrous one, the Cordobés' matador receiving an ugly wound, and three picadors being disabled. One of these poor fellows, after being dashed with terrific force against the barrier, was picked up totally unconscious from

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concussion of the brain. After being attended to in the infirmary of the Bull-ring the wounded were conveyed to the Fonda, which on that evening resembled a hospital rather than an inn. The bull who did most damage was a creature of unusual size and terrific strength, who, besides his human victims, killed eight horses and wounded several.

CÓRDOBA

A GRANADINE GIPSY





CHAPTER X

CÓRDOBA

THE following afternoon, bidding adieu to Valdepeñas, we took train for Córdoba. Within a couple of hours we had left the sterile plateau of La Mancha behind us and were entering Andalucía by its titanic portal, the pass of Despeñaperros, a chaos of seared and savage rocks towering high above a river whose banks were ablaze with crimson oleanders. To our left were those 'craggy and almost inaccessible retreats' in which Sancho and the Don took refuge after the unfortunate adventure of the galley slaves, while to the right was the Venta de Cárdenas, where the honest squire was so unmercifully tossed in a blanket. The inn still stands, a low, rambling structure, dirty and ruinous, more fit for the accommodation of mules than men. Soon after leaving Despeñaperros the railway passes La Carolina, the capital of those colonies established by Charles III. in a wild and wooded region, till then the haunt of the wolf and the bandit. La Carolina stands on a high hill, its streets being laid out with the utmost regularity, intersecting each other at right angles like those of a modern American town. Charles, whose idea in founding these colonies was to put an end to the state of lawlessness which prevailed in this district of the Sierra Morena, first peopled them

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with Germans, the majority of whom died within the first few years 'from eating unwholesome herbs, and drinking too much wine and brandy.' Their place was soon filled by a number of Swiss, Alsatians, and Savoyards, whom Charles attracted hither, offering to stock their farms, provide them with implements of husbandry, and maintain them for the first three years. Innocent of the ways of the predatory Don, these poor folk toiled with characteristic industry, but no sooner had they reduced the wilderness to a state of cultivation than they were ousted from their holdings, which were given to Spaniards, the unfortunate foreigners being obliged to recommence their labours in a more remote and desolate part of the surrounding Sierra. 'Cosas de España !' Passing through Baeza and Andújar, famous for its pottery, we arrived at Córdoba just in time to see the massive tower and merlons of its mosque emphatically silhouetted against a glorious sunset sky of purple and amber. Who could dream that this whitewashed somnolent city was once the glory of the Western world ! that these narrow winding ways, now so desolate, once swarmed with life ! or that the courtyard of the stately mosque, where now the traveller may drowse in solitude beneath the perfumed orange trees, was once the meeting-place of multitudes of students gathered to study in the most enlightened city of the universe ? Yet so it was, and Córdoba, which to-day can scarce boast sixty thousand, held in the tenth century a population of nearly a million.

In those days the city surpassed Baghdad and Damascus in splendour, possessing hundreds of mosques,

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baths, and inns, and being the resort of the learned from all quarters of the civilised world drawn thither by the enlightened Ommeyad Kalifs, who not only afforded protection to the arts and sciences, but were themselves deeply versed in them. Nor was the profession of arms neglected, and warriors had ample opportunity of displaying their courage and address in a perpetual round of tilts and tournaments. Córdoba passed into the possession of the Moors at the beginning of the eighth century, though it did not spring into importance until some fifty years later, when it became the capital of Abdurahman I.

Abdurahman was an Ommeyad, and the only member of the unfortunate family that escaped the fatal feast given at Damascus by their Abbaside rivals. He escaped into Africa, whence, passing over into Spain, he headed a successful rebellion against the existing Moorish power, after which he was proclaimed Sultan of the Arab possessions in the Peninsula. Abdurahman immediately began to improve his capital, refortifying it, laying out new streets and gardens, draining the surrounding marshes, and connecting it with other important towns by means of excellent roads. However, he did not live to complete the work which was nearest to his heart—the magnificent mosque still standing to bear witness to the departed glories of Arab Córdoba. This wonderful edifice, which rose on the site of a Christian church, half of which had been partitioned off for Mohammedan worship, was afterwards enlarged by Abdurahman II., Al-Hakem II., and lastly by Al-Man-súr, when it attained the dimensions of 570 feet

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measured from north to south, and 425 feet from east to west, including the great courtyard which adjoins its north façade. The exquisite larchwood roof, painted in blue, crimson, and gold, rested on interlacing arches, which sprang from more than a thousand columns of marble, porphyry, and jasper. This vast fantastic labyrinth was lighted by 7425 lamps which hung from the roof. To-day only 860 of these columns remain, a large number having been removed in the year 1523 to make space for the construction of the choir which the Christian ritual demanded, and which now disfigures the centre of the once magnificent Mezquita.

It was under Abdurahman III. that Córdoba attained its greatest magnificence. This monarch built for his favourite mistress the marvellous palace of Arrizafa, of which to-day few traces remain, though interesting excavations are still proceeding. We learn that it contained 1247 exquisite marble columns, that the walls of its apartments were encrusted with gold, and that in the central court was an alabaster basin supported by the figures of animals, all gilt and adorned with precious stones, over which hung a pearl of fabulous value. From this palace the Kalif would ride forth hunting attended by a glittering train of twelve thousand horsemen, while on his return he was wont to repose himself in a pavilion which occupied a commanding position in the gardens whence he could overlook all the surrounding country. In the centre of this pavilion, which was surrounded by graceful pillars of the whitest marble, a splendid bowl filled with quicksilver supplied the place of a fountain, while certain cunningly contrived

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holes in the roof, which was encrusted with precious stones, allowed the sunbeams to fall on the quicksilver, lighting the whole room by reflection.

The palace of Arrizafa was completely destroyed by those Berber puritans the Almohades, who overthrew the reigning Almoravides in the year 1148. Eighty-eight years later Córdoba was conquered by Ferdinand III. (the Saint), the Arab population was banished, taking refuge in Granada, and the city of the Kalifs was re-peopled with Christians. This was the beginning of the end, for the lazy, apathetic Spaniards, incapable of appreciating the masterpieces of Moorish architecture which adorned the city, allowed them to fall into decay, so that within a couple of hundred years little remained of its mosques, baths, and public buildings, while, the irrigation works having been completely neglected, the surrounding country had relapsed into that state of barrenness from which it had been rescued in the days of the first Ommeyades.

One afternoon we determined to visit the famous hermitages of Valparaiso which crown the wooded acclivities of the Sierra de Córdoba some miles to the north-west of the city. Having come to terms with the owner of a four-wheeled shandrydan drawn by three gaunt, time-worn hacks, we crowded into it and set out.

Our road, which mounted steadily after leaving the city, at first lay through great plantations of olive trees between whose grey-green foliage peeped out the white-washed walls of farms and country houses. Then it was hedged on either hand with a rank growth of aloes alternating with clumps of prickly pear well covered

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with the yellow 'higos chumbos' beloved of the Spaniards. Later the road skirted the mountain-side, which was strewn with massive boulders, and thickly wooded with evergreen oak, cork, and carob trees. During the latter part of the journey the gradient became so steep that our poor emaciated nags were hard put to it, and we felt constrained to help them by going afoot; nor was this altogether from motives of humanity, for at certain places the road, which was narrow and ill-made, ran perilously near the brink of a precipice, down which our crazy vehicle looked at every instant as though it would roll. At length having arrived before the gate of the hermitage, we clanged the bell, whereupon the door was opened by a sunburnt, bearded hermit, wearing a brown monk's habit and having on his head a broad-brimmed straw sombrero much the worse for wear. Seeing a lady among us, he at first appeared in some perplexity, but after a moment's hesitation, ushered us in.

By way of a path running between whitewashed buildings and a garden in which grew lemon, olive, and orange trees, he led us to a little chapel, pausing before entering to show us a shrine containing the grinning skull of the founder.

He then ushered us into a little room, where he presented each of us with a blessed medal of marvellous virtue and a leaflet on which was printed a poem in praise of the brethren and their good works by one Fernandez Grilo. Over the door of this room, and indeed over every door, was painted in big black letters the word 'Silencio,' an injunction which was apparently

CÓRDOBA

well observed by the poor hermit, who seemed to have completely lost that verbosity which is so characteristic of his countrymen, while such words as he did let fall only went to show that his brains were every bit as rusty as his tongue.

Amid the stately cypress in the grounds the hermits' cells were situated, each standing in its little garden plot sequestered from the outside world by lofty walls pierced by a doorway and a tiny wicket through which the hermit's food is introduced, a bell being rung at the same time to arouse him from his meditations. Finding one of those cells unoccupied, we inspected it. It was divided into two tiny rooms, one a sort of kitchen and the other a dormitory whose furniture consisted of a pallet bed, a deal table over which hung a highly coloured print of the Virgin, and a discipline dangling from a nail on the wall. The view from the hermitage was exquisitely beautiful.

Far below in the plain through which serpented the yellow Guadalquivir lay Córdoba, encircled by its olive groves and dominated by its mosque, whose massive walls were softly gilded by the lingering caress of the declining sun. Beyond, the eye strayed over a chaos of mountain peaks until arrested by the silhouette of the distant Sierra Nevada, rising ghostlike from the misty horizon. As we desired to reach Córdoba before nightfall, we could not long enjoy this lovely scene, so, taking leave of the good hermit, we reluctantly set our faces homewards.

THE GENERALIFE



SEVILLA

CHAPTER XI

SEVILLA

SEVILLA, if we can believe an inscription over one of its gates, owes its origin to that ubiquitous and muscular hero Hercules, a distinction which it shares with several other cities of the Peninsula. Its name is derived from Ishbiliah, which was the Moorish mispronunciation of Hispalis, by which it was known in Roman times. Little or nothing is known of its history previous to the advent of the Romans, and up to 45 B.C., when Cæsar made it his capital, it was a comparatively unimportant place, being completely eclipsed by the neighbouring city of Itálica.

Cæsar having renamed it, Julia Romula proceeded to fortify it, surrounding it with lofty walls and towers. It was also embellished with many fine public buildings, of which to-day no trace remains except the granite columns in the Alameda de Hercules and a few broken statues which are preserved in the Archæological Museum. It was the Gothic capital until the year 567 A.D., when Leovigild, finding Toledo more central, removed his court thither.

In 712 a Moorish army led by Musa, the governor of Africa, appeared before Sevilla, which fell after a siege of a few weeks. It remained subject to the Kalifate of Córdoba until the fall of the Ommeyad dynasty in the

AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

eleventh century, when it became the capital of an independent Moorish state. In the year 1086 Mohammed II., who then ruled in Sevilla, not feeling himself strong enough to resist the threatened attack of Alfonso VI., called to his aid Yusuf, the king of the Almoravides. Yusuf defeated the army of Alfonso and returned to Africa. Some years later, however, on his assistance being again implored, he took possession of Sevilla, which was held by his family until it fell into the hands of the Almohades in the year 1147. A century later it was taken by Ferdinand III., king of Castile, after a siege of six months. Though 300,000 of its Moslem inhabitants were expelled, it still continued to thrive, more fortunate than its neighbour Córdoba, which sank into decadence immediately after falling into Christian hands.

Sevilla was the only city that remained faithful to Alfonso the Learned in the year 1276, when he was dethroned by his unnatural son Sancho. The loyal city was rewarded with the curious seal called 'El Nodo,' which figures on all its monuments and public buildings, and never fails to puzzle the stranger. It is represented thus : NO8DO, and is a rebus signifying 'No m'ha dejado' (It did not abandon me).

But of all the monarchs who ruled in Sevilla Pedro the Cruel is the best remembered. It was in the Alcázar which he had restored and beautified, and in which he lived with his celebrated mistress Maria de Padilla, that many of his blackest crimes were committed. Here it was that he murdered the Moor Abu-Said, covetous of his treasure, and above all of

SEVILLA

that 'fair ruby, great as a racket-ball,' which he afterwards gave to the Black Prince, and which now adorns the Crown of England. Here he tortured to death his loyal Jewish Treasurer, Samuel Levi, and here he slew his half-brother Don Fadrique, the Master of Santiago. Invited to the Alcázar as a guest, Fadrique was entering his brother's apartments when he was set upon and murdered by the king's stewards. It is said that Don Pedro gave the signal for the attack, and that the unfortunate Fadrique received the 'coup de grâce' from his brother's dagger.

It is related of Don Pedro that he frequently disguised himself, and sallying from the Alcázar by night, prowled the streets in search of adventure like the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid.

Unfortunately, he rarely passed unrecognised when indulging in those nocturnal rambles, for though a strong and active man, he had one curious physical defect: his joints cracked loudly when he walked, and this was generally known among his subjects.

Now it happened that one night an old woman living in a lonely street was awakened by the sound of a scuffle, and peering from a window, saw two men at grips immediately beneath it. As she looked, the light of the primitive oil-lamp, with which she illuminated the scene, fell on the glittering blade of a poniard—there was a groan, and one of the combatants sank to the ground. Muffling himself in his cloak, the murderer slunk into the shadows and disappeared. Though unable to see his face, the woman heard the cracking of his joints, and knowing that he must be the king,

AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

uttered a cry of terror and let fall her lamp. Next morning the corpse was discovered and near it the lamp, whose owner was promptly conducted before the Alcalde. Soon afterwards this dignitary set out to see the king. 'Sire!' said he, 'last night a duel was fought in which one of the combatants was killed.'

'Have you found the other?' asked the king.

'Yes, sire.'

'Then I suppose that he has already been punished?'

'No, sire.'

'And why not?'

'Sire, I await your orders.'

'Then let justice be executed!'

Now the king had just made a law that every duellist should be decapitated, his head being afterwards exposed on the scene of the combat, so the Alcalde, having removed the head from a statue of Don Pedro, placed it in a niche above the spot where the corpse had been found. That same day Don Pedro visited the scene of his midnight crime, curious to see what wretch had been made to suffer in his stead, and was hugely amused to see that he himself had been thus executed in effigy. 'Good,' said he. 'Justice has been done, and I am satisfied.' This was one of the incidents which earned for the treacherous ruler the title of 'El Justiciero' or the Just.

The street in which this tragedy occurred bears the name of the 'Calle del Candilejo,' or street of the lamp, and in it may still be seen a bust said to be that of Don Pedro.

SEVILLA

Though Charles v. removed his court from Sevilla to Valladolid, yet the city remained completely faithful to him during the rebellion of the 'Comuneros,' for which it was rewarded with the motto 'Ab Hercule et Cesare nobilitas, a se ipsa fidelitas.'

Following the discovery of America, the city enjoyed a period of unheard-of prosperity. Its streets were thronged with chaffering merchants attracted thither from every corner of Europe and the East, while beside its crowded quays great galleons lay, returned from the Indies with freights of costly merchandise, and crews of reckless adventurers eager to squander their ill-gotten gold in the voluptuous capital of Andalusia. But this era of prosperity did not last, for the government, recognising that the Guadalquivir presented insurmountable difficulties of navigation, ordered that the galleons should be stationed at Cadiz, and thus Sevilla was ousted from her proud position as the port of the Indies.

Sevilla has quite a character of its own. The houses, which rarely exceed one story in height, are flat-roofed like those of the East, and are built round patios which are visible from the street, the front doors being merely 'cancelas' or iron grilles. The exterior walls of the houses are painted or washed in every imaginable colour, which gives to Sevilla an air of gaiety possessed by no other Spanish town, an effect which is heightened by the innumerable pots of flowers which convert every roof, balcony, and window-sill into a miniature garden.

The wonderful cathedral is the largest in Christendom, and some idea may be gathered of its vast pro-

AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

portions from the fact that each of its four side-aisles equals the nave of Westminster Abbey both in height and width ; and yet it is by no means so impressive as that of Toledo, seeming to lack both the richness and the dignity of the mother church of Spain. It occupies the site of the Mosque of Almansúr, and was begun in the year 1401, following a resolution of the chapter of Sevilla to 'construct a church such and so good that it never shall have its equal. Let posterity, when it admires it complete, say that those who dared to devise such a work must have been mad.' The work of construction lasted over a hundred years, and was carried on by architects whose names, strangely enough, have not come down to posterity. Attached to the cathedral is the famous Giralda tower, the lower part of which is Moorish, having been erected by Abn Jusuf Yacub in 1196. The Moors regarded the Giralda with peculiar reverence, and when Sevilla was besieged by Ferdinand the Saint, they decided to destroy it rather than it should fall into the hands of the Nazarenes. This coming to the ears of Ferdinand's son Alfonso, he frustrated their design by threatening to sack the conquered city if the tower was in any way damaged.

Thus the Giralda remained standing, and in the year 1568 an upper section was added consisting of two stages capped by a dome on which gyrates the 'Giraldillo' or weathercock, a bronze female figure thirteen feet in height and weighing considerably over a ton. The tower is not mounted by a staircase but by an inclined plane, up the greater part of which two horsemen may ride abreast. It is a fact worth recording

THE SIESTA



SEVILLA

that the first Christian cavalier to ascend the Giralda was a Scotchman, Lawrence Poore, the ancestor of the marquises of Motilla.

The Alcázar of Sevilla, the greater part of which is due to Pedro the Cruel, is a highly interesting specimen of Mudéjar work, though completely lacking that refinement which characterises the Alhambra.

The pleasure of our first few days in the capital of Andalucía was entirely marred by rainy weather. Water splashed down in cascades from the housetops, forming great puddles in the narrow ill-paved streets, through which reckless Jehus drove at breakneck speed, bespattering the unfortunate passers-by from head to foot.

Under these circumstances, walking the streets becomes quite an adventurous business, and we were obliged to creep along warily, ever on the look-out to escape mud-baths by dodging into a doorway or diving into the mouth of an alley. One evening, roaming the streets in search of diversion, our eyes lighted on a large doorway over which was boldly painted: 'Teatro de Novedades.'

Entering, we found ourselves in an ample hall, at one end of which was a small stage occupied by a troupe of dancers.

This hall was crowded with spectators, a phalanx of whom were seated immediately in front of the stage, while the remainder were grouped about tables in the remoter parts of the hall drinking 'copitas' of Manzanilla or Aguardiente. The audience was largely composed of men and women of the working class with a smattering of toreros and hangers-on of the Bull-ring,

AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

while in the front seats sat a group of peasants, typical sons of the Andalucian soil, swarthy and coarse-lipped, gazing with simian eyes through the swirling tobacco smoke at the stage, on which two Triana gipsy women were writhing in the throes of the 'Baile Flamenco.' The remaining performers sat in a semi-circle at the back of the stage. In the centre two guitarists, ill-clad and solemn of visage, were playing mechanically, obviously uninterested in the dance or the dancers, while next them sat the 'Canta'or' or vocalist, a lantern-jawed fellow, remarkable for his well-oiled 'rouflaquettes' and the large false diamonds that glittered on his dirty fingers. Besides these there were four female dancers and one male. The women, coarse alike in frame, in feature, and in speech, their faces bedaubed with paint and powder, and their blue-black hair bedecked with flowers liberally smeared with 'bandolina,' wore gaudy flounced dresses, just off the ground in front and elongated into a train behind, while small Manila shawls embroidered in the brightest colours were wrapped around their shoulders. The man dancer sported a short bolero jacket of green velvet from which dangled black bobbins, while his nether man was clothed in black alpaca trousers, drawn skin-tight around his loins, while a pair of yellow buttoned boots completed his equipment.

When the two 'gitanas' had finished their performance, their place was taken by two other women, who, showing considerably more perseverance than art, went through the figures of the 'Alegrías,' rolling their black eyes and leering at the spectators, who,

SEVILLA

being strong of stomach, were hugely delighted, encouraging the heavy-footed performers in their wantonness by a vociferous chorus of 'Olés!'

This display was boring in the extreme, and we were glad when, on their retirement, the guitars striking up the fascinating rhythm of the Tango, the man dancer came forward. For a moment he stood, hand on hip and rigid as a statue—then, making the boards resound with his stamping feet, he launched into a series of capers so prodigious that his movements seemed impelled by steel springs rather than by mere muscles, and one felt that each bound would take him clear of the stage and land him among the spectators. Keeping perfect time with the music, he accompanied his antics with an astonishingly loud snapping of his fingers, while his distorted features, gleaming eyes, and bared teeth gave him the appearance of one possessed.

Amid a volley of applause, the performance came to an abrupt end. A final bound and his form again stiffened into statuesque immobility—the dance was over and it was now the turn of the 'Canta'or,' who came forward, seating himself in one of the two chairs which had been placed side by side in the centre of the stage, the other being occupied by his accompanying guitarist.

While the instrumentalist was striking the opening chords of the 'Tarantas' (a form of Malagueñas now much in vogue), the vocalist sat immovable, hands on knees, in the classical position of the 'Canta'or de Flamenco.' In one hand he held the stump of a cigar and in the other a short baton, with which he tapped

AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

the rungs of his chair, marking the rhythm. Then, noisily clearing his throat, he threw back his head, and inserting a crooked forefinger in his shirt-band, tugged at it violently, thus giving more play to his vocal organs.

Having completed this preparation, he shut his eyes, opened his mouth to its greatest extent, and broke into a prolonged quavering ululation, 'Ay . . . e Ay . . . , ' which terminating fortissimo, was followed by the 'Copla,' whose words we distinguished with difficulty, so much were they broken up by the complicated variations with which the singer embellished the melancholy ditty.

El ladrón piensa en el robo,
El asesino en la muerte,
El preso en su libertad,
Y yo, mi morena, en quererte.

The thief he thinks of robbery,
The murderer of death,
The prisoner of his liberty,
And I, my love, of loving thee.

The voice of the singer was harsh as a file, and he sang out of tune with the accompanying guitar, but nevertheless the audience was hugely pleased with the performance, which they encored several times. We gathered from an old peasant sitting next us that, above all, it was the singer's 'buen estilo' or good style which delighted them, otherwise the way in which he feigned to be moved by the words of his song—I say 'feigned' because I believe that no race is more genuinely unsentimental and less easily roused to emotion than the Spanish, and the dramas of love and

SEVILLA

jealousy which we continually hear of undoubtedly owe their origin, not to depth of amatory feeling, but to wounded self-love. After this the 'flamenco' troupe retired, making way for women wearing the old short-skirted costume of Andalucia, who to the accompaniment of a piano, performed 'bailes de palillos' or castanet dance, the Jota, the Bolero, and the Fandango.

The famous Fandango, described by Tomas de Yriarte as 'the delight of joyous youth and severe old age,' is a descendant of the old dances of Gades, whose praises are sung by Martial and other Latin authors, which, it is interesting to note, were also danced with castanets. It was a Spanish-American version of the old 'Bizarro,' which originated in the kingdom of Granada and was introduced into Spain at the beginning of the eighteenth century, when it replaced the none too proper 'Zaraband' described by Cervantes as 'The Dance of Hell.' So great was its popularity that for more than a hundred years no theatrical performance was considered complete unless concluding with the beloved dance, in reference to which I quote the following amusing passage from Swinburne: 'Our evening ended with a ball, where we had for the first time the pleasure of seeing the Fandango danced. It is odd and entertaining enough, when they execute with precision and agility all the various footings, wheelings of the arms, and cracking of the fingers; but it exceeds in wantonness all the dances I ever beheld. Such motions, such writhings of the body and positions of the limbs, as no modest eye can look upon

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without a blush ! A good Fandango lady will stand five minutes in one spot, wriggling like a worm which has just been cut in two.'

Somewhere about the year 1770, a musician called Bolero introduced a dance which has ever since borne his name, and which soon began to oust the Fandango of its popularity. Another ancient dance often mentioned by Cervantes is the 'Seguidillas,' of which there are a number of varieties, such as the 'Sevillanas,' 'Murcianas,' and 'Manchegas.' The 'Seguidillas' are also sung, the airs generally being tuneful and lively, though there is one form of them called 'Gitanas,' popular among the mountaineers of the Sierra Morena, so weird, mournful, and Moresque that it positively makes the listener's flesh creep.

I borrow the following description of the 'Seguidillas Manchegas' from Baron D'Avillier, that excellent authority on Spanish art. 'At the fair of Albacete we had an opportunity of seeing the dance "Seguidillas Manchegas." While the guitarrero was playing a minor prelude each dancer was choosing his partner. The couples then placed themselves *vis-à-vis* at three or four paces distance ; some chords were sounded, announcing to the singers that their turn had come, and they sang some verses of the "Copla." While the dancers only waited the signal, the singers paused, and the guitarreros struck in with the ancient air of the "Seguidilla." At the fourth bar, the cantadores continued the song, the clacking of castanets was heard, and instantly all the couples commenced, with agility and spirit, turning and

SEVILLA

re-turning, joining their partners and flying from them. At the ninth measure, which marks the termination of the first part, the dancers remained perfectly motionless, permitting us to enjoy the grinding of the guitar ; then with renewed energy they changed the step, and introduced the most graceful part of the dance, called "el bien parado." One great point in this dance is made at the moment the measure changes. The dancers, on hearing the last notes of the guitar, must remain motionless, as if suddenly arrested and petrified in the position they happened to be in at the instant. Thus those who remain in difficult and graceful positions are loudly applauded.'

Until recent times the 'Polo' was exceedingly popular in Andalucia. Like the 'Seguidillas,' the 'Polo' was both danced and sung, the melody being a minor one, capable of an infinity of variations. I here give a couple of specimens of the curious and primitive 'Coplas' which are sung with melodramatic seriousness to the dolorous air of the 'Polo' :

Ya me se murió mi mare
y una camisa que tengo
no tengo quien me la labe.

'Now that my mother is dead, there is no one to wash my shirt.'

Los zapatitos blancos
no son tuyos, no son míos.
¿de quien son esos zapatitos ?

'Those little white shoes are not thine or mine. Whose then are those little shoes ?'

The 'Polo' is now rarely heard, having been replaced by the 'Soleas,' a lively version of which are

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the 'Alegrías.' All three have the same six-eight time, the last note of each bar being strongly accented.

The most beautiful airs are undoubtedly those of the 'Malagueñas.' The 'Coplas' sung to them, which are usually of a melancholy nature, consist of four lines, the first being repeated twice at the beginning and once at the termination of the ballad :

Tengo una pena, ¡ que pena !
Tengo un doló, ¡ que doló !
Tengo un clabo remachao
en mitá del corazón.

'I have sorrow, how great a sorrow! I have a grief, how great a grief! I have a nail driven through the centre of my heart.'

Variations of the 'Malagueñas' are the 'Granadinas,' 'Murcianas,' 'Rondeñas,' and 'Tarantas.'

One of the most charming of the Spanish dances is the 'Malagueña del Torero,' in which is introduced the graceful cloak-play of the Bull-ring. It is performed by a woman and a man, the latter wearing the costume of a bull-fighter.

The 'Tango' is also danced and sung. It is a Spanish adaptation of the 'Tango-Americana' or 'Habanera,' and is of comparatively recent origin. It has a curious jerky rhythm which the accompanying musician marks by tapping on the wood of the guitar, in a manner highly typical of the Andalusian style of playing this instrument. The 'Tango' is sung to a minor air, and is then usually called 'Tientos.'

The music of Andalusia has been largely influenced by the gipsies, for the only agreeable characteristic

THE TORRES BERMEJAS

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SEVILLA

possessed by this tawny tribe is a taste for this art. To-day several of the most prominent virtuosos of the guitar belong to this race, and in the days of Cervantes they were particularly noted for their singing of the 'Seguidillas.'

Certain Cuban ballads called 'Guajiras' have now become naturalised in Spain. I believe that the 'Guajira' is sometimes danced, though I never remember having seen it. The airs are exceedingly charming, and are characterised by a certain dreamy languor which stamps them as having emanated from the Americas.

The most lively and fascinating of the Spanish dances is the 'Jota.' Though really Aragónés, it is extremely popular throughout Castile and Valencia. Great agility is necessary for its proper performance, and, above all, it is hall-marked by a modesty which is, unfortunately, lacking in the dances of Andalucía. The songs, too, have a charm which is all their own, the 'Coplas' being characterised by rustic simplicity and humour. The 'Jota Valenciana' differs little from that of Aragón, though the songs are generally more minor and Moorish in character.

The 'Jota' often plays a prominent part at religious festivals, more especially at that of the 'Virgin del Pilár' at Zaragoza, while on occasions it is even danced at funeral ceremonies, in illustration of which I again venture to quote Baron D'Avillier :

'At Jijona, to our intense surprise, we encountered a funeral at which the bereaved were busily dancing the "Jota." It happened, as we were passing along a deserted street, our attention was drawn to a half-open doorway, whence issued sounds of mirth and music,

AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

suggestive of a wedding at least. Judge our astonishment when we discovered it was a burial ceremony. At the far end of the room, stretched upon a table, lay the body of a girl from five to six years old, decked out as if for a fête day ; her little head, ornamented with a wreath of flowers, rested on a cushion. We thought she was asleep ; her face wore a smile of peaceful repose ; but alas ! on seeing a vase of holy water by her side, and four lighted tapers, we discovered that the poor little one was dead. Her mother sat weeping by her side ; the rest of the picture contrasted strongly with the sadness of this scene. A young man and woman, wearing the holiday attire of the ‘labradores,’ were dancing a “Jota,” accompanying themselves with their castanets, while the musicians and those invited to the wake encouraged them by clapping their hands. This rejoicing in Spain has a very pleasing and beautiful significance. Children under a certain age are supposed, immediately after death, to join the glorious company of angels around the throne of God : hence the Spaniards esteem the event one to call forth rejoicing rather than mourning. After the dance a merry peal of bells rang out and woke the echoes of the old street.’

Though one may see the ‘Jota’ danced in any Castilian village, the dances of Andalucía are now almost invariably performed in ‘Cafés Cantantes,’ one or more of which are to be found in nearly every town of the Peninsula. They are ill-conducted establishments, for the most part haunted by criminals and the viciously inclined.

A 'CAPEA'

CHAPTER XII

A 'CAPEA'

ONE morning we started from Sevilla to proceed to the little village of X——, where a 'fiesta' was to be celebrated in honour of the patron saint.

As is general in Spain, the principal rite connected with this semi-religious festival was to be a 'capea,' or unprofessional bull-fight, in which the fighters are usually local aspirants to tauromachic fame. The number of animals fought rarely exceeds two or three, and in this case it was only one, the husbanded resources of the village not sufficing to provide a more luxurious entertainment. On our arrival, we read on a placard posted on the church door (as being an eminently orthodox and conspicuous position) that the protagonist of the impending rustic bull-fight was (in the customary language of Iberian tauromachic announcements) the 'valiant and applauded matador,' Montes xv.

The Plaza de la Constitución had been converted, with an amusing display of rustic ingenuity, into an extemporaneous bull-ring. The barrier for the most part was formed by rows of carts, and where these had failed, a rough wooden fence had been erected to fill the gap.

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In the Plaza stood an old seignorial mansion boasting a fine balcony, which was to serve as the president's box and had been gaudily decked for the occasion, while immediately under this a temporary 'toril' had been erected, wherein was incarcerated 'the lord of lowing herds.' The yard of an adjoining house, whose spacious doorway opened upon the Plaza, provided an excellent cover for the bullfighters, and on the opposing side of the Plaza a 'grand stand' for the more important patrons had been painfully improvised from logs and planks.

A good half-hour before the beginning of the 'función,' the Plaza seethed with excited villagers, who soon occupied every available seat and every inch of standing room, the more adventurous packing themselves between or creeping underneath the rickety carts which partly formed the barrier. The deafening and incessant din of voices, augmented by the raucous cries of the vendors of drinks and sweetstuffs, was at length interrupted by the appearance of the president, an elderly man, who stepped forth upon the balcony, and with him a bevy of giggling 'señoritas,' each attired in a white mantilla and shawl of dazzling hue. Rounds of applause saluted them, and the village band brayed forth a boisterous 'paso doble.' The president, according to the classic signal, waved his handkerchief and the 'cuadrilla' entered. These wore a nervous look, especially the matador, their ambitious chieftain, whose glittering suit had palpably been hired for this day, while as for his tatterdemalion retinue, their rustic attire seemed to have been reinforced by an additional pair

A 'CAPEA'

of bullfighters' suits interdispersed, with a bizarre effect, between the four of them. While the spectators cheered loudly, the combatants saluted the 'Señor presidente' and made ready for action.

The first 'thrill' was to be provided by a local amateur, who by the aid of a pole undertook to leap over the bull's back as it dashed into the arena, and who presently, with a somewhat strained expression, though with unshaking limbs, strode forth and took up his position right in the middle of the Plaza. The 'toril' was now thrown open and there emerged a full-grown bull, enormous, menacing, and of an uncombed and generally hideous aspect. Rolling his eyes around until they fell upon the saltatory amateur, this monster snorted and stamped the ground, then charged pell-mell upon the foeman.

The youth planted his pole and leapt aloft, but alas! too late, for while he yet clung to it, the bull's head struck it, shivering it beneath him. Thus suddenly deprived of his support, the jumper dropped heavily to the ground, landing in a ludicrous posture, while the brute swept on in headlong career, not deigning to glance at his fallen adversary, who rose with precipitation and limped to the barrier, ruefully rubbing the outraged part.

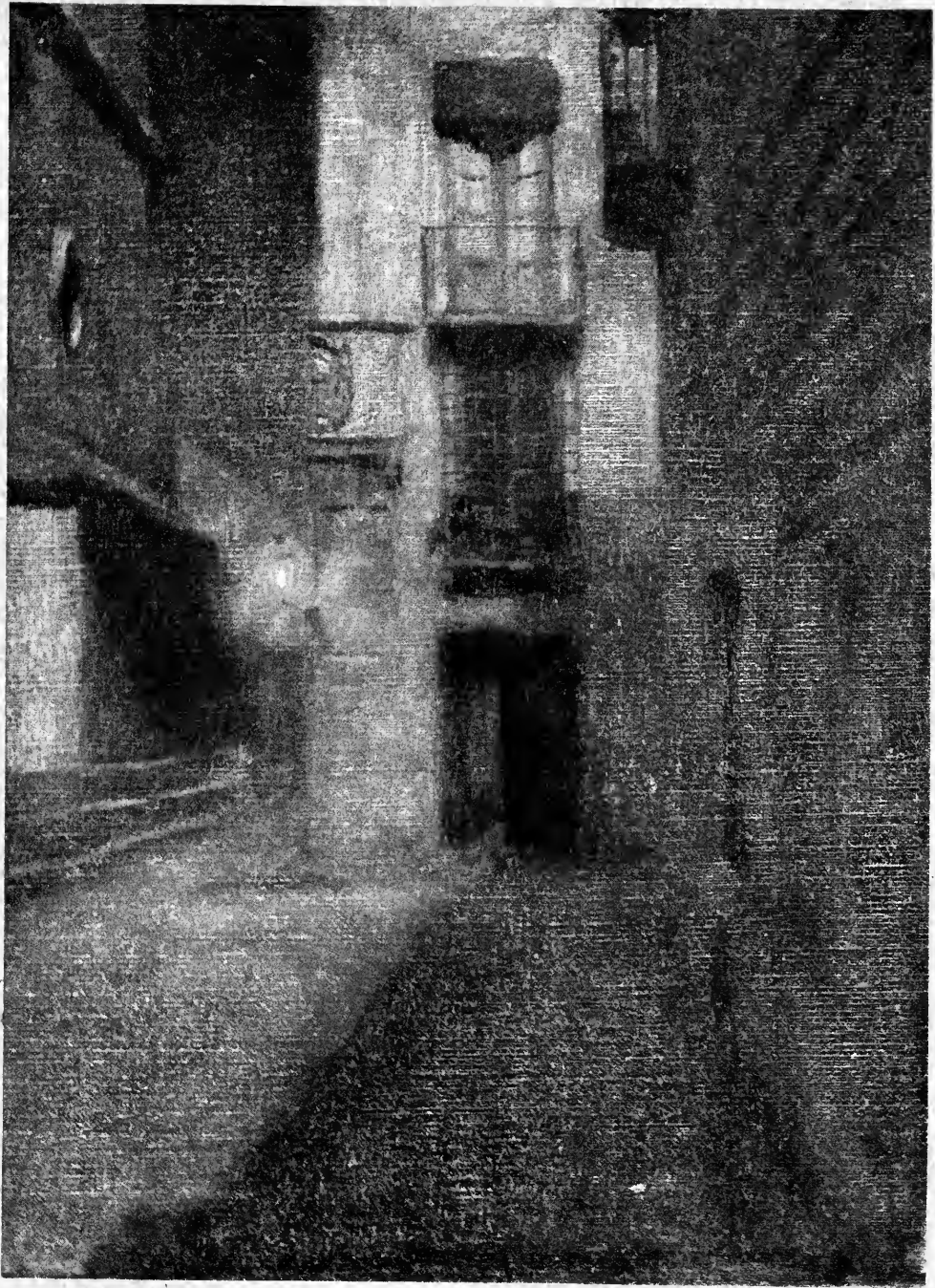
Now began a prodigious flourishing of cloaks, the matador and his assistants vainly endeavouring by this means to deprive the bull of some of its boisterous energy. The spectators wearying of this and thirsting for blood, vociferously appealed to the president, who again waved his handkerchief, whereupon two members

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of the 'cuadrilla,' each armed with a pair of 'banderillas,' stepped forward displaying every sign of trepidation. After numerous nervous attempts had been made to plant these weapons in the bull's neck, the crowd became impatient, loading the unfortunate 'banderilleros' with gibes and abuse. Smarting under the ungenerous treatment, one of them lost his temper, returning the abuse and saluting the spectators in general with a ribald gesture. This retaliation caused a tremendous hubbub; from every side the delinquent was menaced with incarceration; clenched fists were shaken at him, and one excited peasant announced his intention of descending into the Plaza and 'eating the liver' of the wretch who had thus dared to violate the established laws of the Bull-ring. Luckily at this moment a diversion occurred: the other banderillero, hotly pursued by the bull, was overtaken just as he was about to clear the barrier. He escaped the horns by a miracle, but a well-directed blow of the brute's forehead so assisted him in his leap that he shot over into safety as though hurled from a catapult. Having sustained no bodily hurt, he was about to re-enter the arena, when it was seen that his small-clothes had been cleanly rent by a protruding nail, and were now giving egress to a large portion of the tail of his shirt. Needless to say, the sight of this dazzling caudal appendage roused the whole concourse to instant and unextinguishable laughter.

The requisite number of 'banderillas' having at last been driven into the bull's neck, the trumpet sounded, heralding its death. The aspiring matador now came

NIGHT IN MURCIA



A 'CAPEA'

forward, and after having dedicated the death of the bull to the bevy of beauty in the president's balcony, faced his antagonist, armed with sword and muleta. In his first passes he showed such a lamentable lack of science that we began to fear a tragic ending. The boy, however, was no coward, and when the moment came for delivering the fatal thrust, went in with a will. The sword, directed by an inexperienced arm, did but inflict a slight prick in the beast's shoulder, while the matador, his jacket pierced by one of the horns, was lifted off his feet, and, amid a chorus of piercing shrieks from the female spectators, was hurled violently to the ground. The accident, however, appeared more serious than it really was, and while his comrades diverted the bull's attention, he got up, pale, though undismayed, and again prepared to attack his adversary. Six times he attempted the delivery of the death-blow, each time escaping impalement on the terrible horns as though by a miracle. Meanwhile a tremendous hubbub reigned among the spectators, who, not content with reviling the budding matador for his clumsiness, now started to pelt him with oranges and other missiles. But here a diversion was caused, for one of the spectators, rendered heroic by long and frequent pulls at the wineskin, leapt into the arena, eager to display his fancied tauromachic skill. This intruder had succeeded in attracting the attention of the bull, when, tripping over his wildly flaunted cloak, he fell sprawling almost under the animal's nose. A tragedy now seemed inevitable, for the brute immediately made towards him ; but even as it lowered its head to strike, a 'banderillero' darted

AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

forward, and with a rapid pass of his cloak diverted the attack to himself. Saved by this timely intervention, the unfortunate enthusiast beat a hasty retreat, while his rescuer was heartily applauded. There was, however, among the spectators one who by no means approved of this opportune act. He was a grim and grimy ancient, who with flashing eyes suddenly rose from his seat and hurled the remains of a huge watermelon full at the head of the applauded one, at the same time crying indignantly, '¡ Granuja ! Blackguard ! without your meddling we should have seen the bull make mincemeat of him in another moment.' Before the laughter which greeted this original sally had subsided, the youthful matador had dispatched his adversary by a lucky thrust. After this a young cow was let into the arena for the diversion of the youths of the village, full fifty of whom surrounded her, most of them waving coats or blankets instead of the regular bull-fighter's cloak. Every time the animal charged, a number of the rustic heroes rolled over like ninepins, much to the amusement of the onlookers. This continued until the poor cow was tired out, when she was led back to the pastures.

GRANADA

CHAPTER XIII

GRANADA

ONE scorching morning we boarded the train bound for Granada, and during the journey whiled away the time by talking of brigands and brigandage. We spoke of José Maria, the Claude Duval of Spain, who, according to popular legend, robbed the rich, gave to the poor, and was invariably courteous and tender with the ladies. This model bandit, after a long and prosperous career, purchased his pardon from the Government, and having married, settled in his native Ronda, where he ended his days peaceably, an object of popular respect and admiration. If we can believe the contemporary couplets, José Maria must have made a striking figure, with his fascinating whiskers, his picturesque Andalucian costume, his girdle bristling with pistols and poniards, and his blunderbuss dangling from the saddle of his fiery Cordobés courser :

Soy Jefe de bandoleros,
y al frente de mi partida
nada mi pecho intimida. . . .

At about this time, namely at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Andalucía was terrorised by a band of desperadoes called 'Los Siete Niños de Écija,' the seven children of Écija. The most celebrated leader of this band was one Captain Ojitos, a man of good

AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

family, who, like José Maria, was renowned for his chivalry and generosity. Ojitos was eventually killed in a desperate duel with one of the 'seven,' in which both combatants literally hacked each other to pieces. Another celebrated member of this band was José Ulloa, nicknamed 'Tragabuches.' Ulloa, who was a gipsy of Ronda, started life as a bull-fighter and was a pupil of the celebrated Pedro Romero. In the year 1814, when on his way to fulfil a bullfighting engagement in Málaga, his horse threw him, fracturing his left arm. Knowing that it was now useless to proceed, he made his way back to Ronda, and entered his house in time to surprise his wife in the embraces of an acolyte. Seizing his adulterous spouse, he hurled her from a window, then slaughtered the sinning acolyte, whom he found cowering, like one of the 'forty thieves,' in an immense 'Tinaja' or wine-jar. Escaping from Ronda, he became a bandit, casting in his lot with the 'Niños de Écija.' He remained with the band a number of years, performing some notable feats of brigandage, but nothing is known of the manner in which he met his end.

A well-known brigand chief of modern times was 'El Vivillo,' a plump little man with a benign and smiling expression, who, if I am rightly informed, is now living in comfortable retirement in Argentina, having, like José Maria, purchased his pardon from a fatherly Government. According to most accounts he was not so addicted to homicide as his lieutenant Pernales, shot some years ago by the Civil Guard.

Just before arriving at Granada we passed the estate

GRANADA

of Soto de Roma. It was originally a hunting seat belonging to Charles v. In the second half of the eighteenth century it was given by Charles III. to his celebrated Irish minister, Richard Wall, who largely rebuilt it upon the style of an English villa.

Spain was at that time deluged with Hibernians, many of whom rose to positions of considerable importance. The governor of the province of Málaga was an old Irish general named O'Connor, whose eccentricities are thus described by a contemporary author : 'Brute beasts are his delight, and all his apartments are stuffed with bears, dogs, cats, and monkies, to the great terror and annoyance of his visitors.' At the same time Count O'Reilly held the post of Inspector-general of the Spanish infantry. O'Reilly, owing to his bitter tongue, made many enemies among the nobility, while owing to the signal failure of an expedition which he led against Algiers, he was cordially detested by the populace. It is recorded that during a popular festival at Valencia, a number of youths got together and, having fixed upon the deformed son of a French barber to personate the unpopular Count, proceeded to try him by mock court-martial. Being found guilty of cowardice and incompetence, he was condemned to be whipped through the streets, the sentence being carried out with such hearty goodwill that the miserable actor died under the lash. O'Reilly, however, was regarded by the king with unwavering esteem and affection, as the following anecdote related by Swinburne will show : 'When the new road was making to the Palace of the Pardo, a little, ugly, evergreen oak was found to stand

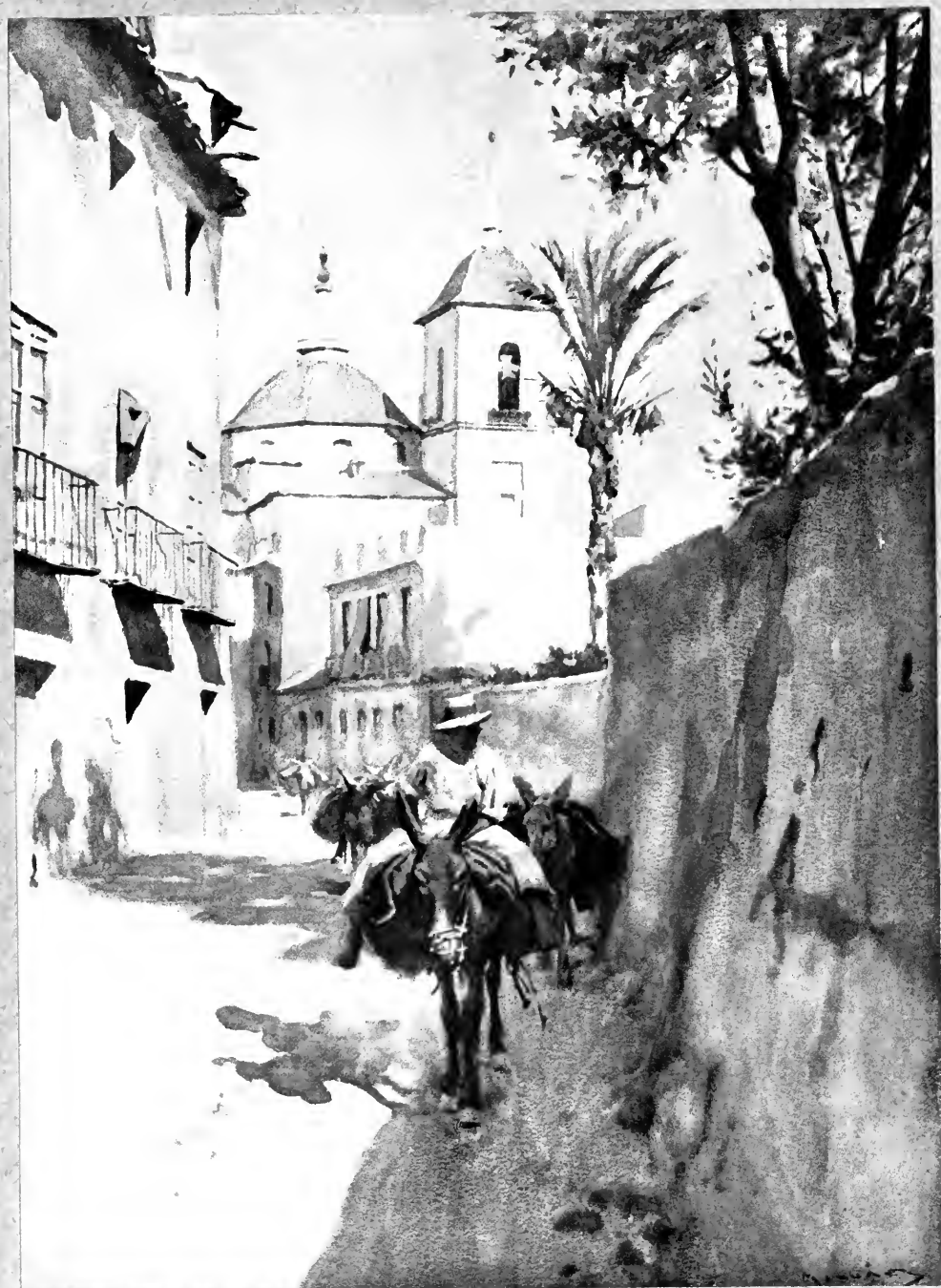
AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

in the line marked out for the highway. This tree, by its oddity and solitary position, had attracted the notice and gained the favour of the king, who forbade the engineers to meddle with it. In spite of all the remonstrances of the minister and surveyors, the oak still remains standing in the middle of the road ; the king often shows it to his courtiers, and, observing with a smile that it has no friend but himself, calls it O'Reilly.'

The estate of Soto de Roma eventually passed into the hands of Godoy, and at the conclusion of the Peninsular War was presented by the Spanish Government to the Duke of Wellington.

There is no city in Spain so overrun with touts and guides as Granada. These loathsome individuals, who are drawn from the lowest classes, are invariably flagrantly dishonest, and are for the most part drunkards. They swarm about the traveller on his arrival, contending savagely among themselves for his possession, for the tout receives a commission of two and a half pesetas on each guest that he delivers into the hands of the Granadine hotel proprietor. The pleasure of a stay in this beautiful city is almost entirely marred by them, for they pursue their parasitical calling in every corner of the town and the Alhambra, pouncing upon the traveller in the most remote and unexpected places, and, shadowing him until he enters a shop, they endeavour to slip in beside him, so that they may demand commission from the shopkeeper for having brought him custom. Their great desire is to entice the traveller into one of those bogus curiosity shops with which Granada abounds, for there they

LA CALLE DE LA ACÉQUIA, MURCIA



GRANADA

obtain a commission of twenty-five per cent. on all purchases. The fabrication of faked antiques has always been a staple industry in this city, and Swinburne tells how the Ambassador of Morocco on his passage through this city purchased of one Medina Conti, 'a copper bracelet of Fatimah, which Medina proved by the Arabic inscription and many certificates to be genuine and found among the ruins of part of the Alhambra with other treasures of the last king, who had hid them there in hopes of better days. This famous bracelet turned out afterwards to be the work of Medina's own hands, and made out of an old brass candlestick.' Conti, 'a most learned, ingenious man, profoundly skilled in the antiquities of his country,' was famous for his frauds. He on one occasion, 'in order to favour the pretensions of the Church in a great lawsuit, forged deeds and inscriptions which he buried in the ground, where he knew they would shortly be dug up again. Upon their being found, he published engravings of them, and gave explanations of their unknown characters, making them out to be so many authentic proofs and evidences of the assertions of the clergy.' This fraud, however, was discovered, and its ingenious author promptly seized and incarcerated.

After the touts and guides, the greatest pests are the gipsies who inhabit the caves of the Sacro Monte. They have a self-styled king, a bewhiskered individual who, dressed as a comic opera brigand, is ever to be seen lounging in front of the Washington Irving Hotel, pestering the passer-by to purchase photos or tickets of admission to the Generalife (which tickets the proprietor

AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

of that palace has strictly forbidden to be offered for sale).

But those who know Granada well are aware that the genuine monarch is not this puppet, but a tawny capitalist who holds the entire gipsy colony in the hollow of his hand, and who does not fail to pocket the major part of the gold that the booby tourist is beguiled into paying in order to witness the indecent exhibitions of gipsy dancing for which Granada is famous.

Once comfortably installed in our hotel, we set out to visit the Alhambra. Entering it through an unpretentious gateway and traversing the marble pavement of the Patio de la Alberca, we lingered to admire the stately hall of the Ambassadors. Wandering on, we circled the garden of Darraxa, and passing through the hall of the 'Two Sisters,' looked long on the fairy beauty of the incomparable Court of the Lions. At length we found ourselves within that splendid chamber whose marble pavement bears the ruddy stains which, according to popular belief, were caused four centuries ago by the blood of the murdered Abencerrages. In the days of the unlucky Abouabdoulah, last king of Moorish Granada, four great families strove for supremacy in that city: these were the Zegrís, the Gomeles, the Alabeces, and lastly the Abencerrages, who for their wealth, their chivalry, and above all for their warlike achievements, were renowned above the others. One of this family named Albin-Hamet, becoming the favourite of the king, rose to a position of such power that the Zegrís and Gomeles, envying his pre-eminence, planned a means whereby his downfall might be

GRANADA

effected. A certain villain of the Zegri family finding himself alone with the king, seized the opportunity of poisoning the youthful monarch's mind against the Abencerrages, accusing them of treason. Nor did the Zegri's treachery end here, for, averring that Albin-Hamet was the lover of the queen, he offered to bring forward three witnesses prepared to swear that they had seen her in the arms of the Abencerrage, beneath the stately cypresses of the Generalife.

The jealousy of Abouabdoulah once aroused, he was soon persuaded to consent to a general massacre of the family.

With this bloody end in view, the principal Abencerrages were summoned one by one to the Alhambra, and as each was admitted, he was seized by the Zegris, who, dragging him to the fountain in the hall, now called after the ill-fated family, struck off his head. Thirty-six had thus been massacred before the city was apprised of the treason by a page who had followed one of the victims into the Alhambra and managed to slip out again unseen. In an instant the city was in arms, and the followers of the rival families were murdering each other in every street. This tumult continued for some days, but was eventually quelled by Musa, a natural brother of the king, though not before many of the most valiant of the Granadine leaders had perished. Then Abouabdoulah, calling a council, justified himself by making public the supposed treason of the Abencerrages and the faithlessness of the queen, who was sentenced to be burnt alive if within thirty days she had not found four champions to do battle for her

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cause. Refusing all offers of assistance from Moslem knights, the queen entrusted her cause to a Christian named Don Juan de Chacón, who promised to appear at the appointed hour, accompanied by three other trusty cavaliers of his own faith. True to his promise, Don Juan made his appearance on the fatal day accompanied by three other champions, all of them disguised as Turkish warriors. Having fought and vanquished the four accusers (two Zegrís and two Gomeles), the Christian knights retired unrecognised. Among the vanquished Moorish champions was Mahomet-Zegri, the scoundrel who had devised the diabolical treachery, and who, finding himself mortally wounded, confessed all, imploring the pardon of the outraged queen.

Abouabdoulah likewise implored the forgiveness of his wife, but this she refused to grant, retiring from the Alhambra and living thenceforth under the protection of her kinsmen. The followers of the Abencerrages also deserted Granada, so that Abouabdoulah, deprived of the best of his fighting men, was left at the mercy of his Christian enemies, who shortly drove him from his throne and kingdom.

THE SIERRA NEVADA

CHAPTER XIV

THE SIERRA NEVADA

SOME twenty miles to the south-east of Granada towers the imposing mass of the Sierra Nevada, whose highest peak, Mulhacen, reaches an altitude of 11,420 feet, its second, the Picacho de Veleta, being some three hundred feet lower. We had long desired to ascend the Veleta, but already on two occasions during previous visits to Granada our plans had been frustrated by bad weather. This time, however, we hoped for better luck, for although the season was far advanced no snow as yet had fallen on the mountains, and the weather showed no indications of breaking up. We accordingly made preparations for the journey, our first care being to hire mules to carry us and our provender. With this object in view, we sought a certain Paco, a muleteer, who prided himself on his knowledge of the mountains. We found the said Paco, a sunburnt, cadaverous youth, lounging at the portal of his dwelling, a cave in the side of a ravine, among those desolate heights which dominate the Alhambra. This habitation the troglodyte shared with his wife and a numerous progeny, the household being completed by a great sow, a goat, a number of miserable fowls, and a famine-stricken she-ass. The terms were soon arranged, Paco agreeing to provide us with four mules at the rate

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of five pesetas daily per mule, his own services and those of two other muleteers being included ; it being understood that we, on our side, should furnish food for both men and beasts. Having clinched the bargain over a bottle of the celebrated 'vino seco' of Granada, we fixed the time of departure, which was to be five o'clock of the following morning, and set off to purchase supplies for the expedition.

The eastern sky was glowing with the amber light of dawn when Paco, true to his tryst, appeared before the Fonda door, and with him came his brother-muleteers and his mules.

Our 'práctico' presented a most brigand-like appearance. Under his battered sombrero his brow was encircled by a gaudy kerchief, its loose ends fluttering in the morning breeze. Over one shoulder was thrown a scarlet blanket, the other supporting the strap of his fowling-piece, while from between the folds of his 'faja' peeped out the handle of a revolver and that of a long and ugly 'puñal.'¹

He was shod with 'alpargatas' or hempen sandals, and we had likewise adopted this form of footwear as being the most practical for a mountaineering expedition. Paco's companions were considerably less theatrical in appearance, their armament merely consisting of the 'navaja' or clasp-knife, without which the Spanish peasant seldom stirs abroad, but which in spite of its ugly looks rarely fulfils a more deadly purpose than the cutting of food and subsequent picking of teeth. Having stuffed our provisions into the ample paniers

¹ Sheath-knife.

THE GOATHERD, MURCIA

the service of
the nation; it being
the duty of every
citizen to serve his
country in the best
manner he is able.

The service of
the nation is the
highest duty of every
citizen.

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THE SIERRA NEVADA

of the sumpter mule, we turned our attention to our mounts, softening the asperities of their primitive straw pack-saddles with a layer of overcoats and blankets.

Passing through a grove of lofty elms, where, behind the veil of rustling foliage, innumerable birds chirruped and chanted to the rising sun, we emerged upon the brow of the Alhambra hill. We now obtained an uninterrupted view of the chain of the Sierra Nevada, and were dismayed to observe that the Picacho de Veleta was capped with an ominous cloud. Our muleteers, however, took a cheerful view of matters ; so, reassured, we proceeded on our way. Descending the hill, we crossed the river Genil, directing our course along the dusty Huetor road. Here, despite the early hour, was a scene of animation, for heavy 'carros' laden with market produce were jolting and creaking towards Granada, while beside them rode cavalcades of swarthy peasants mounted on gaily caparisoned mules and donkeys. Soon we struck into the 'Camino de los Neveros,' the mule-track followed by those men who gather snow in the Sierra for the supply of Granada. Following this track, we at length found ourselves upon a blood-red plateau, where we paused to look back at the sun-lit city stretched out beneath the frowning Moorish fortalice, its milk-white houses gleaming pearl-like through the fast-dispersing morning mists.

And now our narrow way wound upwards amid crags and boulders, skirting wild valleys and fearful gorges until, emerging from a deep defile, we looked down upon the silvery Genil and the village of Pinillos nestling far below us amid poplars and olives.

AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

Invigorated by the healthful mountain air, and enchanted by the beauty of the scene, we gaily pursued our journey into the bosom of the hills, while behind us trudged our muleteers, one of them trolling a Granadina, whose minor oriental melody, carried across a wide ravine, came back in a mysterious echo from the opposing crags and precipices. Presently, however, our cheerfulness gave way to fear and gloom, for the wind, which had been freshening for some time, now swept into our sight a number of dark cloudlets, the swift and ominous precursors of the storm. These, blotting out the sun, transformed the smiling landscape into a drab and dismal prospect. Hitherto the mountains had seemed to bid us welcome, but now, like a capricious host who wearies of his guest, they appeared to have repented of their complaisance. The chilling wind obliged us to don our coats and wraps, but the muleteers contented themselves with swathing their heads and necks in mufflers, in truly oriental fashion. We took our lunch in a gloomy and desolate valley, beneath a rugged mountain called the 'Dornajo,' whose forbidding crags towered high above us, their summits obscured by the fleeting clouds. Before we had finished our repast the rain began to fall. It had been our intention to camp that night on the margin of a lake situated some two thousand feet below the summit of the Veleta, taking advantage of the rough shelters erected by the 'Neveros,' or snow-gatherers, for their protection against sudden storms. We now abandoned this plan as being too difficult of accomplishment in the rain and mist, and decided to ask for shelter at a lonely

THE SIERRA NEVADA

'cortijo' or farm, the last human habitation passed by the traveller in ascending the Sierra. After splashing through a torrent and scrambling for some hours over steep and perilously narrow tracks, our 'práctico' thrice losing his way (for the landmarks were obscured by the mist), we arrived before the door of the 'cortijo,' shivering, drenched to the skin, and generally wretched.

We were hospitably received by the farmer, who ushered us into the kitchen, a low-pitched, white-washed room, destitute of everything but the barest necessities. A wood-fire was blazing in the great open hearth, and, crowding round it, we endeavoured to dry our soaked clothing, at the same time re-animating ourselves with a long pull at the wine-skin. The evening was a merry one, for our host produced a battered guitar, and Paco turned out to be an expert dancer.

The farmer having spread straw and blankets on the floor of an upstairs room, we retired early, being lulled to sleep by the droning melodies which floated up from the kitchen, where the muleteers, squatting round the fire and fondling the 'leather bottel,' made merry until well past midnight.

The dawn had scarcely broken when we were aroused by Paco, who, cheerfully announcing that the weather had changed for the better, bade us rise and prepare to continue the journey. We did so with all speed, and, sallying forth, were overjoyed to see that the rosy morning sky was now unflecked by a single cloud.

Taking leave of our rustic host, we started, making

AN ARTIST IN SPAIN

our way round the shoulder of the 'Dornajo,' whose grim grey pinnacles rose high above us to the left, while to the right we looked down into a deep and dismal ravine, whose boulder-strewn sides gave sustenance to stunted evergreen oaks, gnarled and twisted into shapes so weird and human that they might well have figured in one of the infernal forests dreamt of by Dante.

After five hours of hard going we arrived at the foot of the final peak, and breakfasted beside the icy waters of the lake of the 'Mares.' Tying up the mules in the shelter of the 'Neveros' (for we could take them no farther), we started to ascend the final two thousand feet, glad to circulate our blood, for it was bitterly cold.

A lengthy and laborious scramble brought us to the breezy summit of the Veleta, where, looking around over the wild chaos of peaks, the mighty mass of Mulhacen first caught our eyes, while beyond it to the east the jagged pinnacles of the Alcazaba shot skywards. Southwards lay the fertile valleys of the Alpujarra, where scarce four centuries ago the harassed remnant of the Spanish Moors were butchered by their Christian conquerors, while to the south-east, full forty miles away, the azure waters of the Mediterranean broke in lines of silvery surf on the golden sands of Almería. To the west we looked down upon numberless small cumuli, which, floating over the distant Vega of Granada, had all the appearance of a flock of titanic sheep moving across a vast meadow, while beyond the Vega the eye strayed over countless peaks and ridges until arrested by the massive ghostly outlines of the Sierra Morena, which bounded the distant horizon.

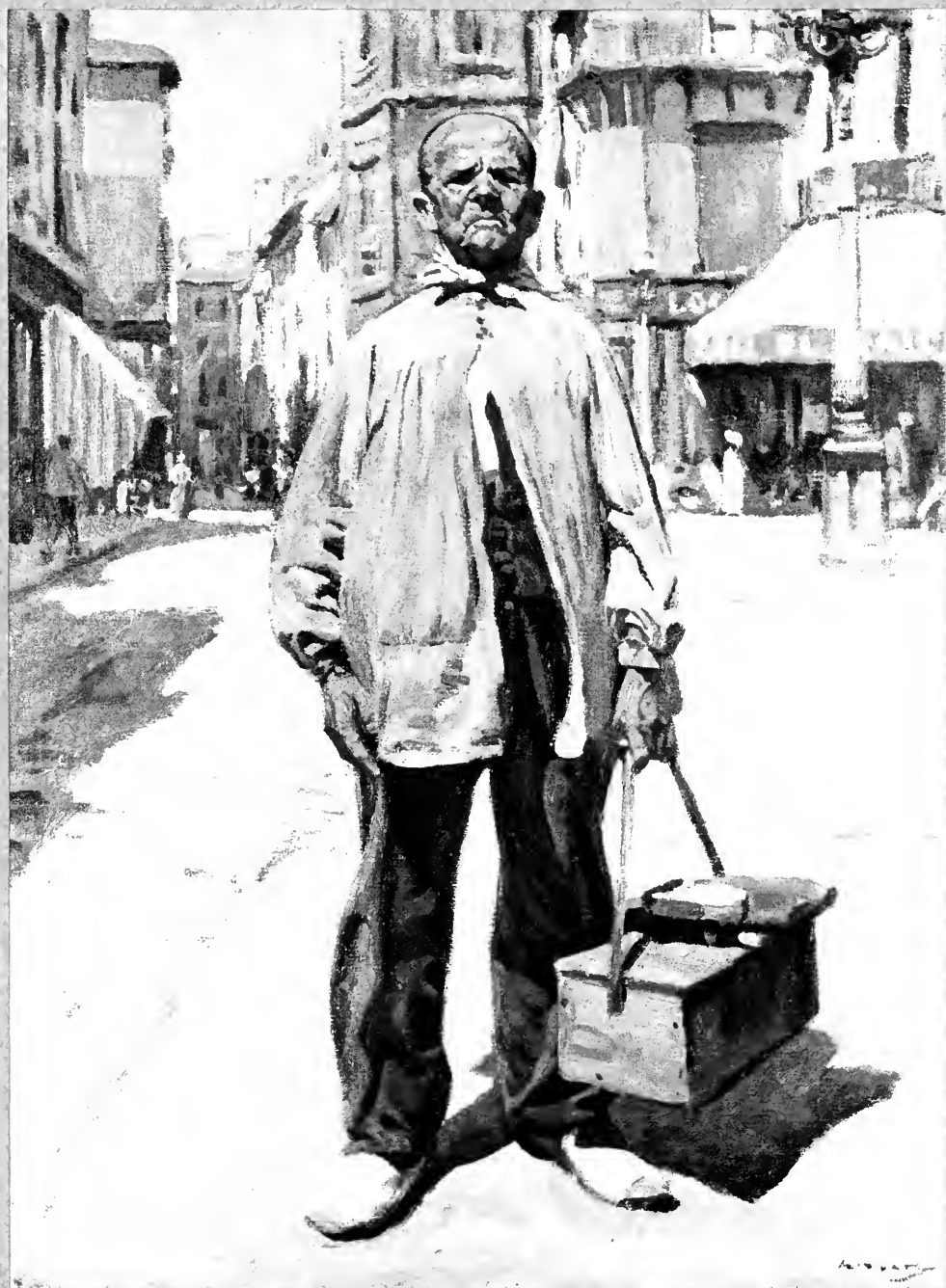
THE SIERRA NEVADA

Marvellous as was the panorama, we could not long remain to enjoy it, for we naturally wished to accomplish the most difficult part of the return journey before nightfall. Just before we reached the lake, Paco tried to bring down a magnificent eagle which hovered close above us, but his ammunition had got wet on the previous afternoon, so that his piece misfired and the great bird floated off unhurt. Mounting our mules, we set out homewards, but though proceeding as speedily as possible, night overtook us soon after passing beneath the 'Dornajo.' We were now obliged to dismount, and leading our mules, we groped our way as best we could over the stony, precipitous track.

Under these circumstances progress was of necessity slow, and it was long past midnight when, weary and footsore, we took leave of our muleteers before the door of the Fonda.

MURCIA

‘ABUELITO’



CHAPTER XV

MURCIA

AFTER a long and tiring journey, part by rail and part by diligence, we arrived at Murcia, which lies in a small fertile plain called the 'Huerta,' surrounded by a jumble of forbidding mountains, tawny of colour and entirely devoid of vegetation. The city is most Moorish of aspect, with its flat-topped houses and narrow winding streets. These streets are covered by awnings, which in summer are stretched from roof to roof, and have all the appearance of oriental bazaars. The city is built on the banks of the Segura, which being deprived of the greater part of its water for the irrigation of the Huerta, is usually muddy and shallow, though at times, when swollen by the winter rains, it sweeps down, a broad and imposing torrent, flooding the 'Huerta' and carrying all before it.

The half-gothic, half-renaissance Cathedral dominates the city. It is built of a warm yellow stone, and has a massive northern tower and a fine western façade, which when illuminated by the late afternoon sun is particularly impressive. Alfonso the Learned seems to have regarded the dean and chapter of Murcia with particular favour, for he bequeathed to them his bowels, an odd and gruesome legacy which is carefully preserved in an urn in the cathedral. Ford laments that

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this sapient monarch did not also leave them a portion of his brains, for then 'this Dunciad See and city might have profited, for it is the dullest city in Spain, which is no trifle.'

Though Murcia has long had the reputation of being the most backward of Iberian cities, it is by no means so primitive as is generally supposed, and possesses, amongst other good points, some of the best and cheapest hotels to be found in the Peninsula.

Our Fonda was situated in the Calle del Principe Alfonso, which somewhat resembles the Sierpes of Sevilla, being shut to all wheeled traffic. Nowhere could the city life be better studied, and we often sat for hours on our balcony watching the tide of swarthy humanity ebb and flow beneath us.

Here the good citizens took their evening stroll, accompanied by their farded helpmates and followed by their families, in charge of the sluttish 'criada' or servant-maid. Loud-voiced sellers of lottery tickets darted in and out among the crowd, while innumerable boot-blacks slouched to and fro in front of the cafés, increasing the din with their oft-repeated, monotonous cry of 'Limpia Botas!'

Conspicuous in the throng were the sturdy bronzed 'Huertanos,' farmers and market-gardeners who, as they passed the sumptuous 'Casino,' saluted their landlords, the proud proprietors of the 'Huerta' plots, who, lounging in front of it in comfortable wicker chairs, puffed at their penny cigars and ordered their glasses of water from the obsequious waiters, with a dignity worthy of a stronger drink.

MURCIA

In Murcia the heat was terrific, the thermometer sometimes registering 120° Fahrenheit, for the south wind blew from the burning sands of the Sahara.

One afternoon, escaping from the stuffy city, we took a long ramble in the verdant 'Huerta,' where, lulled by the droning of a myriad insects, we strolled beside the reed-fringed irrigation canals, the work of cunning Moorish husbandmen, who centuries ago transformed the wilderness into a flowering garden.

Under a cloudless canopy of brilliant blue, the 'Huerta' stretched, an unbroken mass of variegated verdure, to the foot of the sterile mountains that hemmed it in. From amid luxuriant groves of mulberry, orange, and lemon trees peeped out the creamy walls of mud-built, Moorish-looking farms, above whose terraced roofs the date-palms waved their feathery heads, burdened with great clusters of yellow fruit.

Under the fierce and blinding rays of the African sun, the 'carros' creaked and rumbled over the dusty farm-roads, laden with produce for the Murcian market, or strings of sleepy-eyed donkeys pattered along, their paniers stuffed with scarlet 'pimientos' for the pepper-mills, while from time to time a tinkling of bells announced the approach of a herd of goats, who went straggling by, the barefooted goatherd strolling leisurely in the van. Near a farm, cotton-clad, black-hatted 'Huertanos' were toiling, indifferent to the afternoon heat, one of them using an archaic wooden plough drawn by a yoke of patient oxen, whose heads were

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protected by mitres embroidered in gaudy colours, and another, hidden among the dark-green foliage of a fig-tree, trolled a 'Malagueña' while lazily filling a basket with the luscious fruit. On the threshing-floor a couple of labourers were flailing a pile of 'pimientos,' and the sunlight, reflected upwards from the scarlet vegetables, bathed their swarthy features in a most infernal glow.

As the sun set in a glorious glow of purple, rose, and amber, against which the lofty, gently-swaying palms made most fantastic silhouettes, the white-clad labourers, leaving the fields, strolled along the road to a little Venta, half-hidden in a clump of giant 'cañas,' where, seated round rough wooden tables, or lounging beneath the weeping willow which shaded the porch, they sipped their 'aguardiente,' talking of the weather and the crops. As we wandered homewards the moon rose, yellow as a mighty Murcian orange, bathing the western mountains in a pallid light, while yet the eastern ranges were ruddily illuminated by the after-glow. In a hollow by the roadside we passed a little farm, embosomed in a mass of inky verdure. The door was half open and we caught a glimpse of the simple, whitewashed interior, lit by a flickering 'candíl,' and of the shelves of bright-hued pottery, typical of the Murcian homestead. Outside, the moonlight gleamed on the adobe walls and on the white garments of a man who, seated near the doorway, was singing in a high tremulous falsetto, accompanying himself on a guitar. In the evening stillness his voice carried far, and long after the singer was lost to our view,

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the words of the dolorous ditty came clearly to
our ears :—

Cartagena me da pena,
Murcia me da dolor,
Cartagena de mi alma,
Murcia de mi corazón.

VALENCIA AND CATALUÑA

TARRAGONA CATHEDRAL

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA



CHAPTER XVI

VALENCIA AND CATALUÑA

VALENCIA, nestling in a fertile plain beside the sparkling waters of the Mediterranean, is a bright and pleasant capital, while its inhabitants, though reputed cunning and vindictive, are outwardly amiable and lighthearted. The city has within recent years lost much of its former oriental aspect, for the massive crenated walls which surrounded it have been pulled down to make way for spacious boulevards, and many of its narrow Moorish streets exist no more, having been replaced by ample modern thoroughfares, which echo the strident horn of the automobile and the clanging bell of the electric tramcar. During our stay at Valencia we frequently took one of these trams to the busy port of 'El Grao,' whence we strolled on to the beach to watch the great lateen-rigged fishing craft come in and put to sea, laboriously dragged over the yellow sand by teams of ponderous oxen. Often, too, we wandered along the sandy cart-tracks of the 'Huerta,' surrounded on all sides by semi-tropical verdure, most refreshing to the eye. But the most amusing spot in all Valencia is the market-place. What a din is here! The incessant clamour of buyers and sellers who are conducting their bargaining with the utmost vociferation, is reinforced by the strident voices

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of market-women crying their wares, and the mournful wail of the half-starved peasants from Aragón, who are endeavouring to find customers for the coarse woollen stockings knitted by their women-folk. The babel is further augmented by the never-ceasing rumble of heavy carts as they jolt over the uneven cobbles, and the intermittent clanging of church bells. At one side of the market-place rises the stately Lonja, the ancient mart of the far-famed Valencian silks, while facing it stands the quaint old church of Los Santos Juanes, in whose foundations are a number of cellar-like shops which for centuries have been occupied by tinsmiths. The clock tower supports a weathercock in the form of a bird, concerning which the following amusing story is told. Valencia has always been the resort of numbers of Aragonés out-of-works, many of whom abandon their own poverty-stricken land to settle here, and by dint of thrift and perseverance, attain considerable prosperity. Local tradition says that once upon a time it was a common sight to see an old Aragonés farmer who, accompanied by his son, was going the round of the Valencian tradesmen in the hope of finding the rustic youth a job. If he were unsuccessful in this quest, sadly he used to lead the boy to the market-place, and, pointing to the famous weathercock, would bid him observe its revolutions. When the simple youth withdrew his gaze from this fascinating object, he found that his father had disappeared in the crowd. The boy, finding himself marooned in strange Valencia, needless to say broke forth in bitter cries and wailings, till one or other of the prosperous Aragonés shopkeepers in the square,

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calling to mind his own identical experience in the days long past, cheered him and took him in, and gave him board and lodging and employment. Meanwhile the father of the boy had mounted his moke without a qualm, and placidly jogged homeward, feeling indeed quite satisfied within himself that he and nobody else in all the world had started his young son on the high road to fortune.

At a certain café which we frequented in Valencia an Aragonés was employed as shoeblack. He was generally known as 'Abuelito' (little grandfather), and was, in character, typical of this thrifty and hard-headed race. In face and form the old fellow recalled one of those gnome-like figures which Velasquez so delighted in painting. In height he was well under five feet, but his legs being abnormally long in proportion to his body, he resembled nothing on earth so much as an ambulating pair of tongs. The originality of his structure was most remarkable, when, after having administered the final master-touch to his clients' boots, he rose from his knees and, puffing out his little chest, stalked across the floor of the café with the majestic stride of a six-foot London policeman. One day we were surprised to see that he had discarded his workaday blouse and corduroys, and was arrayed like a prosperous farmer, sporting a black velvet suit and a shirt of dazzling whiteness, while across his waistcoat was festooned a massive silver watch-chain embellished with a variety of coins and seals. 'Why this unwonted finery?' I inquired. 'Sir!' said he, 'I am about to take my annual holiday.' 'Where?' I asked. 'On my

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estate in Aragón, to be sure, where,' added he, with Spanish courtesy, 'your honours have your house and your friend.' Then, taking his leave, he strode across the Plaza in the direction of the railway station, puffing majestically at a large cigar. We were afterwards told that this extraordinary little fellow was really the possessor of a farm and extensive vineyards which he had bought with his hard-earned savings, accumulated during the many years in which he had plied his trade of shoemaker.

One day we ascended the 'Miguelete' tower, and looking out over Valencia, we spoke of the Cid. Hereabouts must have stood that tower of the old Alcázar whence the hero showed to his wife and daughters the invading host of the King of Tunis encircling the city. Those were rough times, and according to modern ideas, the hero was merely an unscrupulous marauder; yet the sonorous Castilian stanzas which tell of his mighty deeds, warm one's blood like the generous nectar of a Manchegan vineyard.

The Valencian peasants still adhere to the old Water Tribunal, wherein they settle all disputes relative to the irrigation of their lands without the aid of clerk or lawyer. We several times witnessed this patriarchal ceremony, which is of extreme antiquity, having been established by the Valencian Moors early in the tenth century. It is held once a week, at noon, in front of a venerable gate of the Cathedral, adorned with time-worn and mutilated statues of the twelve Apostles, who seem to gaze down with an expression of grotesque solemnity on the jarring litigants below. The entire

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paraphernalia of this Tribunal consists of an antique sofa, on which sit the seven rustic judges, and a movable iron railing, which encloses the space necessary for the administration of justice. Some hours before the opening of the Tribunal, the square in front of the Cathedral is thronged with excited peasants, for the most part clad in sombre black ; for the ancient Valencian costume, so remarkable for its gaudy colours, is now but rarely seen. Just before noon the judges make their appearance and take their seats. They are men of grave demeanour, well-to-do farmers, each one representing a certain district of the 'Huerta,' or fertile plain which surrounds Valencia. The Tribunal having been declared open, the names of the litigants in the first case are called. These, with their witnesses, are ushered into the enclosed space by the attendant 'Alguacil,' who is careful to deprive them of sticks or other offensive weapons. Each side is heard in turn, the judges consult in whispers, and within a few moments sentence is pronounced. The parties retire, generally abusing each other roundly, and make way for others. There is no appeal from the decision of the court, and he who dares to defy its ruling is deprived of the water which irrigates his land, his crops dry up, and he is ruined.

About nine miles to the south of Valencia lies the Albufera, a great lagoon, on whose banks are several villages inhabited by an amphibious people, who gain their living either as fishermen or by the cultivation of rice in the many miles of swamp by which they are surrounded. One of these villages, called Salér, was

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our objective when one cloudless morning we set out, packed into one of those two-wheeled tilt-carts known as 'Tartanas.' In the 'Tartana,' which is the classical vehicle of Valencia, the passengers sit facing each other on two seats placed lengthwise, while the driver perches on the right shaft, his feet supported by a wooden step. One marvels at the way in which he keeps his seat, as the springless vehicle, drawn by a galloping Rocinante, leaps and jolts over the ruts ; but, as a matter of fact, he has a more comfortable time than his passengers, for they are tossed and rattled like dice in a dice-box.

We passed through many hamlets composed of 'Barracas' or thatched cottages, most of them white-washed, though some were painted in brilliant colours. One of them, its ultramarine walls covered with purple clematis, presented such a bizarre appearance that we pulled up in order to enjoy the effect ; on which the owner came running out and invited us to inspect his store of onions and melons, with a view to purchase. The poor fellow had mistaken us for foreign merchants, and retired surprised and disgusted on learning that we were only perambulating artists.

After some hours of jolting, we drove into the little village of Salér and pulled up before the door of the Alcalde's cottage. This worthy's wife, who enjoyed much local renown for her culinary skill, welcomed us cordially and readily agreed to cook us a lunch, whose 'pièce de résistance' was to be a 'Paella,' the national dish of Valencia. While this feast was being prepared, we explored the neighbourhood, starting with the village

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itself, the miserable appearance of which testified to the poverty of its inhabitants. It was composed entirely of the one-storied cottages called 'Barracas,' their roofs thatched with reeds from the adjacent marshes, and invariably surmounted by the wooden cross of Caravaca. Two large doorways, one at each end of the building, give access to the interior, which consists on the ground floor of but one apartment, which serves the inhabitants as sleeping and living room. Should the family be large, which is rarely the case in the villages of the Albufera, the surplus members sleep in the cock-loft, which they reach by means of a ladder.

Leaving the village, we rambled through a pine-wood, catching occasional glimpses between the tree-trunks of the sapphire Mediterranean, flecked here and there by the white sails of distant feluccas. The sun blazed down on us pitilessly, and we were fiercely attacked by swarms of mosquitoes, which in this district have a well-earned reputation for ferocity and venom. Returning to the 'Barraca,' we were soon doing justice to a succulent meal. The famous national dish, which is composed of innumerable tit-bits of fish, flesh, and fowl cunningly ensconced under a mountain of saffron-stained rice, was eulogised by every one, especially H——, who is an epicure. While we were yet at table, the Alcalde, who up to that time had been working in the fields, made his appearance. He was a sturdy, honest-looking little fellow, generally known as 'El Cubano,' for he had passed some years of his life in the Spanish Indies. His proposal to take us for a sail was readily acceded to, and within a short time we

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had embarked and were proceeding down the canal towards the open waters of the Albufera. On each side of this canal stretched enormous rice-swamps in which men were labouring up to their knees in the muddy water. The Alcalde talked much of the deadliness of this fever-stricken district, and confirmed the report which we had heard that few inhabitants attain the age of sixty. Later we came upon two men who were manipulating large shrimp-nets, submerged to the armpits in the malodorous waters of the canal, their wan, emaciated faces bearing eloquent witness to the unhealthiness of their occupation. On reaching the lagoon, the Alcalde discarded the punt-pole with which he had hitherto propelled us and hoisted the sail. The boat heeled over, and we were soon skimming over the water at racing speed, disturbing great flocks of water-fowl, who rose from the reeds with hoarse cries and a prodigious flapping of wings. We had hoped to see some flamingoes, for they are said to haunt the Albufera in large numbers, but in this we were disappointed. The abundant game of the lagoon, which is the property of the State, is strictly preserved, but twice a year, on St. Martin's and St. Catherine's Days, the public are allowed free shooting. Thither in thousands repair the good citizens of Valencia, carrying, in addition to their lethal weapons, well-stocked hampers and bulging wine-skins.

After sailing about for some hours, we returned to the village, and whilst our horse was being harnessed, partook of some light refreshment in the Alcalde's cottage, and were soon surrounded by half the inhabi-

MONTSERRAT AT DAWN



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tants of Salér, who dropped in ostensibly to chat with the Alcalde, but in reality to satisfy their curiosity regarding the 'señores extranjeros.' Among them was a man of heroic proportions, a veritable Valencian 'Gurt Jan Ridd.' The sleeves and trousers of his light cotton suit were rolled up, displaying Herculean limbs which were burnt to the colour of old leather. His comely person contrasted strangely with the miserable form and bloated features of the village drunkard, who, thrusting his way to the front, started babbling to us in a strange tongue, which he announced to be French.

The hour for our departure having arrived, we took a cordial leave of our friends of the Albufera, and within a few hours arrived safely at our Fonda. This same Fonda is situated in a Plaza, where seemed to be centred all the multiplied noises of Valencia. During the daytime it is filled with babbling throngs, who congregate around the kiosks in which are sold iced drinks; but it is not until midnight that the real fun begins. At this hour you are abruptly awakened from your slumbers by the slamming down of the iron shutters which protect the shop fronts. Then your bedroom is suddenly illuminated by the fierce glare of the arc lamps which are simultaneously switched on all over the Plaza. All Valencia seems to be promenading below, talking, laughing, shouting, and singing, whilst the night is made hideous by the blatant discords of several hurdy-gurdys, which, posted within a few yards of each other, are boisterously grinding out different airs. This pandemonium continues until nearly four o'clock in the morning, when it gives way

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to the noisy rattling and rumbling of the market carts as they jolt over the cobbled way. Towards six o'clock you probably manage to get to sleep, too worn out to be disturbed by the incessantly clanging and tinkling bells of the cows and goats which supply the citizens with their morning milk.

On our way to Tarragona we passed through enormous orange groves, the rich green of the trees contrasting pleasantly with the red earth in which they were planted. The culture of oranges is, even in this balmy southern climate, by no means easy, and to prove remunerative must be conducted with unceasing care. A high wind will do enormous damage, and to guard against this the groves are often surrounded by hedges of tall reeds known as 'cañas.' The soil in which the orange trees grow must be regularly watered during the summer months, and manured several times a year. The fruit ripens towards November, but that destined for export is gathered while yet green.

It is not only from the sale of the fruit that the orange-grower derives his profit, for the fallen blossoms, which in early spring cover the ground beneath the trees like a snowy carpet, are carefully collected and exported to other parts of Europe, where they are used in the making of perfume.

Towards nightfall we arrived at Tarragona, from which we carried away few pleasant recollections. The people, like most Catalans, are boorish and discourteous, though doubtless, like certain of our own compatriots, they have their hearts in the right place, wherever that may be. The old yellow sandstone cathedral is very

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fine, especially the interior, which is shrouded in that impressive gloom so characteristic of Spanish cathedrals.

Not far from Tarragona, in a fertile valley, stand the ruins of the gigantic monastery of Poblet, founded by Count Ramón Berenguer iv. towards the middle of the twelfth century on the spot where lay buried Poblet, a hermit of no ordinary sanctity. It was richly endowed, and became the place of interment of the earlier kings of Aragón.

The riches of the Bernardine monks of Poblet became proverbial, while the library of the monastery was undoubtedly one of the finest, not only in Spain but in the world.

The number of the monks was originally five hundred, but later it was reduced to sixty-six, and these were invariably scions of the noblest houses of Spain. They were attended by a retinue of servants, each riding abroad on a milk-white mule gorgeously caparisoned. Within the walls of the monastery were hospitals for the sick and a palace for the use of the sovereign, while an army of artisans was employed, so that the fathers were entirely independent of the outside world for all their wants.

As the power of the haughty monks increased so their reputation for sanctity declined, and strange tales were whispered by the peasantry of most ungodly doings of the white-robed friars.

Peasants who knew too much or talked too freely were summoned to the monastery, and once inside were never heard of more, so that ugly rumours about a rack and dungeon began to get abroad.

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The end came in 1835, when Poblet was stormed by the anti-clerical mob. The monastery was sacked and left in ruins, while the magnificent library was ruthlessly destroyed. The monks made good their escape, and it was well they did so, for the fury of the mob was unrestrained when, after bursting in, they found the grisly rumours to be true, for there was a torture-chamber furnished with a rack, and below it a dungeon filled with human bones.

Leaving Tarragona, in due course we arrived at Barcelona, where we put up at a modest but most comfortable Fonda just off the Rambla de las Flores. The inhabitants of this turbulent capital are very different in their manners from the uncouth and hard-headed population of the rest of the province. Here we met with nothing but kindness and courtesy, and we shall always recall with pleasure the days that we spent there. The city at first strikes one unfavourably, for here the commercial spirit reigns supreme. The glorious southern sun is frequently obscured by the smoke issuing from innumerable factory chimneys and the streets are dirty, whilst one cannot traverse the older parts of the town without having one's nose offended by odours as offensive as those which issue from the stinking alleys of a Maugrabin port. In many of the newer streets one encounters buildings in the vilest possible taste, monuments of the blatant vulgarity of this happy age. These things, however, seem to be the joy of the modern Spaniard, who points them out with pride as indicative of progress. One can still find, however, a few quaint corners, the crumbling remains of the Barcelona that

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Cervantes called 'la flor de las bellas ciudades del mundo.' The cathedral, too, with its glorious stained glass, is a jewel of which the good citizens are justifiably proud.

Before leaving Catalonia we of course ascended Montserrat, that holy mountain of fantastic outline which lies some eight leagues north of Barcelona, visiting its convent and its hermitages and enjoying the matchless panorama from its summit. This was our final pilgrimage, and having performed it, we took train for home.

